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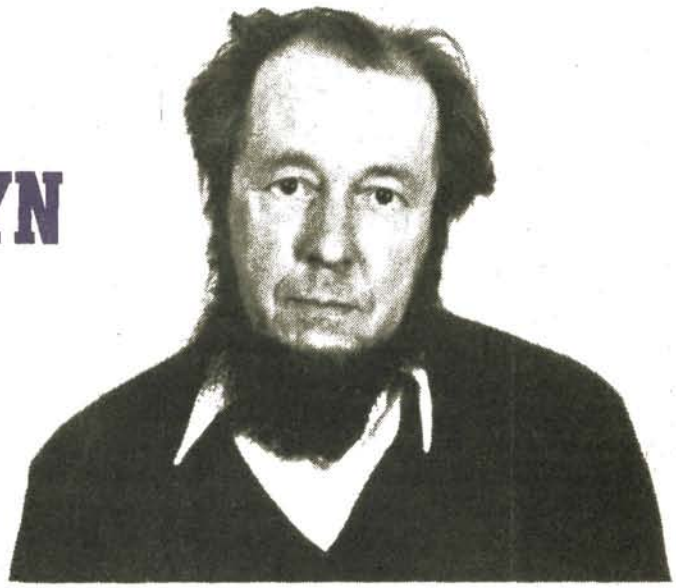
THE MEANING OF SOLZHENITSYN
JOHN LUKACS



THE POSSESSED AND THE DISPOSSESED
SISYPHUS

AGE BEFORE BEAUTY
MICHAEL NEWMAN

Leo Pfeffer
THE 'CATHOLIC' CATHOLIC PROBLEM

John Navone
ITALIAN CATHOLICISM

Arlene Swidler
ST. ELIZABETH OF NEW YORK

Dorothy Dohen
CHRISTIAN MARXISM

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NEWS & VIEWS

Troubled Detente

The Economist for July 5 ticks off Vatican diplomatic gains in Communist countries, and observes that the red carpet awaits the Pope's emissaries in most red nations these days.

There are exceptions, of course, notably China and Albania. However, *The Economist* remarks, "slowly but surely, the Vatican and most of the world's Communist governments seem to be getting onto the same wavelength."

Yet the big question still remains to be answered, in the opinion of the British weekly. Specifically, "can the policy of small tactical concessions by both sides—very small ones so far by the Communist side—be successfully translated into more comprehensive deals?"

This is a vital matter for the Pope, comments *The Economist*, for he is said to regard the Catholic Church in Eastern Europe as "the true growth point of the Christianity of the future."

"The secularized West" is alleged to have been "virtually written off" by the Pope.

A complicating factor for the Vatican in all of this is the Church's institutional weakening in traditional strongholds. *The Economist* notes, for instance, newly emerged "revolutionary tendencies from within" in Italy, Spain, Portugal and various Latin American countries, and the fact that "ever fewer people are going to church" in so-called Catholic countries.

Such phenomena, says *The Economist*, may cause Communist countries to "wonder why they should negotiate with a partner so manifestly weak."

In other words, "why make concessions which may later prove to have been unnecessary?"

Troubled Innkeepers

The Holy Year isn't doing for Rome's spate of new deluxe hotels what their promoters obviously expected.

Moderately priced hotels have been turning people away from the beginning of spring, according to *Informations Catholiques Internationales*, but the deluxe hotels —a half-dozen could be cited, having from 200 to 700 rooms—have remained half empty.

The explanation apparently rests in the nature of the Holy Year visitor. The average pilgrim is from the lower-middle class or the rural world, is looking for modest lodgings, and taking pains not to spend too much money.

To accommodate this pilgrim, Peregrinatio Romana, the Vatican's Holy Year tourist bureau, has requisitioned a number of religious institutions and is offering some 7,600 beds at from $9 to $10 a night, thus meeting more than half the demand of those seeking moderately priced rooms.

Unhappy over this "encroachment," the business community has protested to civil authorities, who, in turn, have insisted that the religious institutions meet high safety standards and also that they obtain hotel licenses before accepting paying guests.

This policy is intended to protect the traditional tourist industry against competition from religious orders. It threatens to have a boomerang effect, however: for the religious institutions which have obtained licenses will appear next year in the official guide of classified hotels, with prices defying all competition.

Cooling on Coors

That cold Coors isn't refreshing all who can get it. The Chicano community in the West had had a nine-year boycott against the beer. It's got a new ally in Northern California Local 888 of the Teamsters Union.

The Chicano boycott derives from the company's allegedly racist hiring practices at its Golden, Colo., brewery. In an area where Chicano unemployment is twice that of the "white" population, less than 2 percent of the brewery's several thousand workers are Chicano.

Local 888's grievance has to do with lost contracts, disputed NLRB elections, and an anti-union drive coordinated out of company headquarters in Golden.

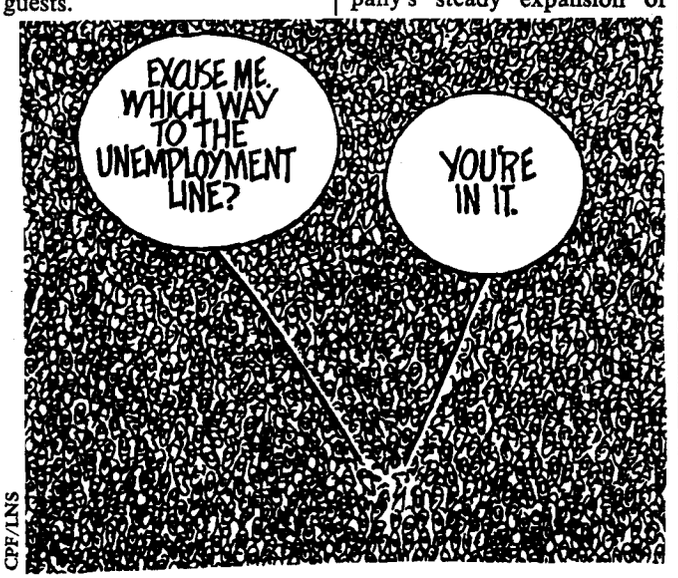
Trouble of this sort is old brew to Coors.

Thirteen Colorado construction unions have been on strike against Coors since 1968 because of the company's steady expansion of its brewery facilities with non-union labor.

And the Federal Trade Commission several months ago socked the company with charges of restraint of trade, price fixing and exclusive dealing, among other counts.

The company goes serenely along, supporting right-wing causes, law-and-order agencies (one Coors brother donated a helicopter to the Denver Police Department in 1970), and patriotic foundations.

The Coors philosophy is simple. "By 1990, there will be only three major [brewing] companies left," William Coors, president and chairman of the board remarked to the *Wall Street Journal* in 1973, "and we intend to be one of them. . . . I take a lot of satisfaction in opposing all the forces that would like to put us out of business."



Odds and Ends

—Resigning the priesthood is Father Hubert Richards, 53, British theologian, academic and author. "It has been made progressively clear to me over the past three years," he said, "that as a priest I am not free to teach theology in any Roman Catholic establishment in this country." Richards had resigned in 1972 as head of Corpus Christi College charging interference by Cardinal Heenan in academic freedom.

—If anyone was going to one-up John Wayne, it had to be Rev. Carl McIntire, the conservative-fundamentalist preacher. McIntire is planning a "Vietnamese village" as a new tourist attraction at his complex in Cape Canaveral. It will be just "like one our boys went into during the war," said McIntire. He's bringing some 40 Vietnamese refugees to Florida to people the village. They'll make porcelain elephants, vases and other items "that Americans love so well."

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Locking Out Father

Providence, R.I.

To the Editors: Michael True's article in your June 6 issue "Locking Out the Prison Chaplain" suffers mightily from an oversimplification of a rather complex issue. Naturally Mr. True is entitled to his opinion and in a magazine dedicated to presenting opinion you are entitled to permit him to express it with considerable bias. I would like, however, to call attention to some errors of fact.

In the first place Father Marstin was excluded from the prison's "medium" security building not its "minimum" facility. That may seem a piddling error to one who knows nothing about the Adult Correctional Institutions and the significance of the medium building as the place where many of the disputes, fights and disturbances that have torn the prison in the past few years have started.

In another significant error Mr. True reports that Sister Constance Guertin and Brother Michael Reis, Father Marstin's teammates, quit in support of the priest's position. That is simply not true. Both stated unequivocally on the public record in both the *Providence Journal-Bulletin* and the *Providence Visitor*, the diocesan weekly paper, that they supported Bishop Gelineau's position, were pleased that he would become more personally involved in advocacy of prisoners' rights and added that they were resigning in order to preserve the credibility of any new chaplains who might be appointed. That is a far cry from quitting in support of Father Marstin. Those statements are available on the public record and it is unfortunate that Mr. True didn't make use of them in preparing his article.

The statement signed by the 35 priests, religious and lay people taking Bishop Gelineau to task was a forceful one, but it is not necessarily one that reflects the general attitude of the

(*Continued on page 318*)

NEWS & VIEWS: 290 **CORRESPONDENCE:** 291
EDITORIAL: 291
WASHINGTON REPORT: *The Possessed and the Dispossessed: Sisyphus* 292
PATTERNS OF ITALIAN CATHOLICISM: *John Navone* 293
ST. ELIZABETH OF NEW YORK: *Arlene Swidler* 295
WHAT SOLZHENITSYN MEANS: *John Lukacs* 296
'WHAT I THINK ABOUT THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH': *The 'Catholic' Catholic Problem: Leo Pfeffer* 302
'AMERICA AND CRISIS': *An Exchange of Views:* 305
AGE BEFORE BEAUTY: *Michael Newman* 309
VERSE: *Jack Lindeman* 301; *Dom Julian Stead, O.S.B.* 308
THE CHRISTIAN-MARXIAN ALTERNATIVE: *Dorothy Dohen* 311
FANTASTIC STORIES: *John Garvey* 314
BOOKS: *C. Peter Ripley, Michael Roberts* 313
ILLUSTRATIONS: *Front cover: Solzhenitsyn, New York* Times/Harper & Row; *Auden, Jill Krementz*

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THE WOMEN

At the International Women's Year World Conference recently sponsored by the UN in Mexico, sharp divisions appeared immediately, with significant differences of approach obvious between the women-delegates from the developed countries and those from the developing nations. Delegate after delegate from the poorer areas made it plain that they were not particularly interested in sexism, abortion and similar topics considered vital by many of the women from the Western industrialized nations; instead they insisted on the need for a new international political and economic order. In turn France's Minister for Women's Affairs spoke for many women in calling the potential politicizing of the Conference a typical male-inspired chauvinist maneuver, saying: "Throughout history men have got women to fight their revolutions, but once the fight is terminated, the women return to making coffee. And International Women's Year will have been one more trick if it is swiftly deviated toward political goals, national or international, no matter how urgent, respectable or noble."

In spite of these differences, the Conference in the end did succeed in adopting a landmark ten-year plan. The 48-page document produced by the delegates is not legally binding but it is hoped that member-nations of the UN will take it into account in their own planning. Emphasizing the need to increase the role of women in decision-making in their own countries (to say nothing of the United Nations itself, where women represent only 8 percent of the delegates), the Conference proposal provides for drastic yet realistic improvement in the condition of women over a wide range of areas, from education and vocational training through political participation and employment to health and nutrition. If the nations of the world take the document as seriously as they should, women's lot ten years from now could and should be significantly better.

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No one, however, should underestimate how far women around the world have to travel to achieve a decent and dignified status. Bad as is the lot of men in the poorer countries, the woman's is even worse. Because men are considered more valuable in less advanced cultures, boys are favored over girls from birth on, even on such fundamentals as how much food is allotted to each. To the illiterate, most roads are closed, yet about 500 million of the world's females are totally unable to read or write. By any index available, whether food allotted, life expectancy, infant mortality or whatever, the gap between the average impoverished woman in the developing countries and the typical American female is incredibly wide. They are step-sisters at best, living in separate worlds, and this fact fully explains and justifies the interest of the delegates from the developing countries in pushing for consideration of larger economic and political questions. Sexual equality is a noble goal, but in the poorer nations in particular it makes sense only in terms of drastic reforms in economic and political structures. There is, after all, not too much point in being equally free to suffer from malnutrition.

WASHINGTON REPORT

THE POSSESSED AND THE DISPOSSESSED

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, most famous graduate of the Gulag Archipelago, has been touring the United States in recent weeks. Solzhenitsyn, resembling either an unkempt religious prophet or a dishwasher, talks about rights and wrongs in this fortress city of the West whose foreign-policy makers, traditionally deaf to such considerations, argue into the night about strategies and tactics.

Ironically, Solzhenitsyn, refugee from the Soviet Union, found himself, as of mid-July, uninvited to the White House, where, presumably, President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger spend a lot of time formulating plans to thwart Communism's advance here, there and elsewhere. Solzhenitsyn is as welcome among foreign-policy bureaucrats here as Dostoevsky, had he been invited as a delegate to the Council of Vienna, or Tolstoi, had he been invited to the Versailles Conference—or, perhaps, Jesus to the First Council of Nicaea. Henry Kissinger has stood in the White House door in order to bar Solzhenitsyn's meeting with the President. After all, just what would the Kissingers of the great nation-states say in response to Solzhenitsyn if he quoted to them the last lines of Dostoevsky's novel, "The House of the Dead":

> "Yes, with God's blessing! Freedom, new life, resurrection from the dead . . . What a glorious moment!"

Of course, it's misleading to gild the literary lily, even if Solzhenitsyn did receive a Nobel Prize for his writings. The English translations of his novels give the impression he is an awkward and propagandistic writer, who does not deserve to move in the same Pantheon as Chekov, Gorky, Turgenev, as well as Dostoevsky and Tolstoi. His novels read more like Frank Norris's or Zola's—bluntly powerful, but crude. Nor should it be forgotten that Solzhenitsyn speaks as a royalist in politics and economics and religion. He would not have felt comfortable at Independence Hall two hundred years ago, or at an economists' convention today, or in most churches on Sunday mornings. This observation seems necessary because more is being made of him than is warranted, both as writer and political critic, by the AFL-CIO agitprops who are paying his expenses in the United States.

All the same, his appearance in the United States at this time is making an impression on politicians here in Washington—an impression that is likely to influence the future of "détente" with the two major Communist nations, China and the Soviet Union—particularly the latter. Foreign policy sets a nation's course, but human beings, too, often appear to alter the course. So, perhaps, with Solzhenitsyn, coming at a time when there is a perceptible uneasiness among moderate and liberal members of Congress about the course of détente.

President Ford gained considerable domestic support by his actions, however debatable, in retrieving an American freighter and its crew that had been seized in the spring by Cambodians. But the unofficial word in early July that he would not receive Solzhenitsyn on grounds of "foreign-policy considerations" has lost him standing both in the country at large and, importantly, in the Congress, particularly those whose main interest is in foreign policy. Concretely, Ford's refusal generated an invitation by Senators of disparate political tendencies, to Solzhenitsyn to meet with members of Congress at an open house in the Capitol. The turnout was large. (Should the President ultimately relent and see Solzhenitsyn the political damage would already have been done.)

The invitation itself was illustrative of friction between the Congress and the President over policies and programs that relate to the Soviet Union. Newer members —both young and old from northern and western states —are showing signs of being unenthusiastic about Kissinger's cooperative policies—détente— toward the Soviet Union. At this writing, this attitude does not reflect the mindless, knee-jerk, demagogic anti-Communism of the 1950s that fractured the country. In-

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stead, they are willing to accommodate in the context of the perils of nuclear warfare. But these members of Congress argue that the policy of "détente" appears to be one-sided.

Several Senators on and off the Foreign Relations Committee visited the Soviet Union during the July 4 recess. A few of these, hitherto reacting reflexively to the word "détente" as something "good," now are indicating a willingness to reassess their attitude and, in so doing, to summon Kissinger to the committee room to ask him "just what is détente doing to benefit us." Is "détente" founded on public relations or diplomacy?

Kissinger, undoubtedly, would argue that there is no clear alternative, amid nuclear arms rivalries, to pursuing détente—despite the imbalance. His aides argue that the imbalance is inherent in the relationships between the two countries—that the United States, being more advanced, has so much more to offer in terms of technology, agricultural and industrial commodities, etc. But moderate and even left-of-center senators are skeptical. Those who made the trip to Russia returned most impressed with the secretive, repressive, uncooperative attitude of their hosts—whether it be dinner-table conversation or inquiries about the U.S.-Soviet joint space mission or whatever. These senators suggest the Soviets have nothing to offer us in the way of space technology; those from the midwestern states are unhappy about the American grain sales to the Soviet Union under deceptive conditions three years ago and want more information about grain sales that may occur soon; others suggest we mistake a change from a scowl to a smile on Soviet officialdom for a change in attitude. In sum, this suggests not so much a resurgence of anti-Communism, as a principal arrow in the politician's quiver, as it does a growth of recalcitrance in any dealings with the Soviet Union—the Soviet Union as a nation, not as a doctrinaire nation, gospel in hand, seeking to rule the world. As for China, any meaningful attitude within the Congress may not be discernible until scheduled trips there by senators and representatives take place this summer and fall.

Solzhenitsyn's talk at the congressional reception for him took place on the day that there began the first joint U.S.-Soviet space mission. Soviet spacemen maneuvered 150 miles above the earth, while Solzhenitsyn protested out of his experience the imprisonment of minds and bodies within the Soviet Union itself. Simultaneously, too, Kissinger, sowing sibylline words on behalf of "détente," was touring midwestern states. Over the years, we tend to fluctuate between benevolent thoughts and righteous chastisement of both the Soviet Union and China. Whatever the undoubted need to avoid nuclear war and mindless activism, it is useful to remember the profoundly collectivist and anti-individualist cast of the Soviet and Chinese governments, however viable they may be.

SISYPHUS

Patterns of Italian Catholicism

The state of the Church in Italy baffles many Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Just as the United States is regarded as a showcase for democracy, Italy is expected to be a type of national exhibition ground for world Catholicism. But, alas, under the very shadow of the Vatican flourish the largest Communist party this side of the Iron Curtain, the scandals of *La Dolce Vita* and a widespread indifference to Sunday Mass attendance. The weaknesses of the Church in Italy, like the shortcomings of democracy in America, underscore the fact that no society or culture ever realizes the aspirations of its greatest minds and leaders.

But if the Italian religious situation offers little grounds for complacency, it is undoubtedly far more hopeful and dynamic than the average English-speaking Catholic generally assumes. For those who tend to believe that practicing Italian Catholics do not have minds of their own, it would be surprising that all but two in a class of forty laymen catechism teachers (in Rome) voted for divorce because they were convinced it was the Christian thing to do.

After the Second World War the Church in Italy was forced to realize that it was steadily losing contact with the conscience of the working masses. It was Italy's seemingly insoluble social problems which already had led to the political dead-end that started splitting the ranks of Catholics. The Italian Young Workers' Organization (GIOC) said that the biggest problem of Italian Catholicism was to reestablish contact with the workers. The Church had to come out for reforms to help the poor in an Italy where the official Government survey listed 12 percent of the population as 'indigent' and another 11 percent as 'poor.'

Much of the Church's soul-searching was carried out in the missionary spirit prevalent in Tuscany and Emilia. These were the lands which had brought forth the Renaissance in the fourteenth century, and which in the postwar period were calling for a Catholic reawakening. Churchmen and laymen in northern Italy insisted that "A Christian is always in revolt. Our society must be changed." A Dominican, Enrico di Rovane, writing in a Turin newspaper, asked for a regime of austerity to end "the scandalous differences in the standards of living which exist in the country." In Communist-controlled Bologna Cardinal Lercaro said, "The Church will be ruined if it does not go along a new path . . .," an utterance proleptic of Pope John's call for *aggiornamento*.

Since the war the government has been continuously in Catholic hands, and the republican Constitution itself,

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which came into force in 1948, is in large measure the product of Catholic minds. Political power and control, however, are no satisfactory gauge of religious vitality in any country. There are many indices of the shape and vitality of religious life in Italy; among them is a national survey of religious opinion undertaken by *Doxa* a few months ago.

Doxa, the Italian equivalent of the Gallup Poll, investigated what Italians think of Christ. The findings of the *Doxa* study, reported in *Famiglia Cristiana*, reveal that, despite the present crisis in values and a so-called decline in religious awareness, Jesus remains the historical personage that the majority of Italians approach with the greatest love and hope, even when they describe themselves as non-practicing.

Asked which of the following personages they liked most, Italians responded as follows: Jesus (64%), Gandhi (2%), Garibaldi (12%), Martin Luther King (11%), Mao Tse-tung (2%), Marx (4%), no indication (5%). There was a marked difference according to sex among those who preferred Jesus: men (54%), women (74%).

The same poll investigated the degree of interest in the above personages and Mohammed, according to five categories. With regard to Jesus: 43% were very interested, 37% considerably interested, 10% little interest, 4% not at all interested, 6% indifferent or non-committal. Interestingly, Martin Luther King placed second.

The third question of the poll asked why Jesus was preferred to the others. There were 13 categories for the response: because I believe in him (38%), he is the God to whom we pray (16%), he is the God who created us (7%), because he is God, the Son of God (11%), because he is the most human, humble, good (4%), because of his teaching and religion (7%), because he is always timely, modern (1%), because of his unique self-sacrifice and martyrdom (3%), because he is our Redeemer (6%), because of his mysterious, complex, interesting personage (6%), other replies (.4%), because I know him better than the others (4%), I do not know why (4%).

Asked what was the first dogma that came to their minds, three of four replied that they did not know. Of eight dogmas listed, that of the Trinity came first to mind among those who thought of a particular dogma. Asked the first capital sin that came to mind, there was some confusion with commandments in the reply. Half of those asked replied that there was no first sin that came to mind; among the others, murder came first to mind for 22%, theft for 5%, cursing and swearing for 5%, lust for 3%, envy for less than 3%, pride and greed for 2% each.

The sixth question of the *Doxa* poll concerned beliefs. Belief in Hell: among all interviewed (47%), among practicing Catholics (67%), among non-practicing believers (31%), among the uncertain and non-believers (7%). Belief that Jesus is the Son of God: among all interviewed (77%), among practicing Catholics (93%), among non-practicing believers (71%), among the uncertain and non-believers (23%). Belief that Mary is a virgin: among all (58%), among practicing Catholics (81%), among non-practicing believers (39%), among the uncertain and non-believers (9%). Belief in the immortality of the soul among the same respective categories (62%, 80%, 51%, 18%).

From a geographical point of view, unbelief is lowest in Southern Italy (11%) where 58% of the population declares itself "believing and practicing." In the industrial triangle of Milan-Turin-Genoa, despite generalizations about industrialization and religion, approximately the same percentage (57%) of the population declares itself "believing and practicing." It is in central Italy that this category is lowest (49%). The poor (55%) tend to believe more than the wealthy (48%).

The seventh question of the *Doxa* poll, perhaps the most revealing, asked how the individual would classify himself. "Believing and practicing" characterized 54.4% of all the interviewed, 43% of the men, 65% of the women, 39% of those from 15-24 years, 49% of those from 25-34 years, 54% of those from 35-54 years, and 68% of those over 54 years of age. Believing and non-practicing characterizes the status of 33% of the interviewed, 40% of the men, 26% of the women, 39% of those from 15-24, 38% of those from 25-34, 35% of those from 35-54, and 23% of those over 54. The third category consists of those who do not believe or believe somewhat and are in both cases not contrary to religion: 8.6% of all, 12% of the men, 5.4% of the women, 15%, 9%, 8%, 5%, respectively in the age groups.

Prof. Gustavo Guizzardi, of the University of Padua in his paper at the Eighth World Congress of Sociology in Toronto ("New Religious Phenomena in Italy: Towards a Post-Catholic Era?"), insists that it must be borne in mind that, in Italy, a Catholic socialization is extremely penetrating; Catholicism is not only a religion, but also a real symbolic universe. In the most complete sense of the word, it is an interiorized system of representing reality, and also a pattern of behavior. Breaking links with this cultural origin, according to this professor of the sociology of knowledge, implies a real revolt against the social and historical "father," a radical change that also implies the greatest of conflicts and emotional difficulties. The *Doxa* survey on Italian religious life and thought implies the tenacious hold of religious thought and values despite the presence of many secular ideologies which threaten and challenge its very right to survive.

JOHN NAVONE

(Father John Navone, S.J., a previous contributor, is a member of the faculty of the Gregorian University, Rome.)

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ST. ELIZABETH OF NEW YORK

ARLENE SWIDLER

Any woman saint is eyed with some suspicion in feminist quarters today, being by definition a man's woman: Canon Law, which must have sounded quaint even to our grandmothers when it was published in 1917, provides that only males may submit causes for canonizations; lay men may nominate people for sainthood, but even nuns have to get a Cardinal Protector to speak for them. The process continues in the celibate male atmosphere: priests prepare the documentation, priests promote the cause and other priests play the devil's advocate, priests make the decision. We end up with female models for women set up according to male standards.

On the other hand, church and synagogue women are digging into their religious pasts looking for spiritual models. A glance at some of the feminist liturgies being produced over the past few years shows a Jewish Passover service commemorating Jewish heroines from the days under the Pharoah up through the Holocaust, a Protestant service celebrating the Matriarchs, and a Catholic Mass featuring a reading from St. Catherine of Siena. And all these memories were preserved for us within and by a predominantly male religious tradition.

So what kind of reception will feminists give a newly canonized Elizabeth Ann Bayley, Widow Seton, as the Vatican documentation puts it? There's a classic legendary quality about her life which will be quite appealing in this bicentennial era. Born in 1774, the beautiful daughter of a Columbia College anatomy professor, active in the social life of New York, married to a handsome young man, mother of five children. And then she was suddenly widowed in Italy, and after much soul-searching left the Episcopal Church in New York to join the Roman Catholic Church (though Roman Catholics being more ecumenical these days and Episcopalians less classy, the drama is somewhat muted). From there she went to Maryland to become the mother of the American Catholic parochial school system.

The problem in evaluating saints is that they're as human and complicated as the rest of us. As Catholic youth is told so often in religion classes, "You could go to hell imitating the vices of the saints." Preachers and catechists have always pulled out whatever details they found useful in teaching about saints, and the distortion has been tremendous.

Catholic Mariology is the best example of this. Gospel facts are so few and pious enthusiasm so great that mystics have provided us with an incredible number of visionary details. One modern biographer shows us Mary kneeling in humility to St. Joseph. Pope Paul VI finally called a halt to much of this with his statement last year that Mary was the first and the greatest of the disciples, thereby embarrassing the American bishops, who had just issued a statement that there were no women among the disciples.

What will pious preachers make out of our first native-born American saint? Probably she will become a symbol of the parochial school system at a time when it needs a little glamour to make it worth all the sacrifices. Conceivably St. Elizabeth of New York might raise chancery consciousnesses around the country to the point that Sisters will begin to administer, and not merely staff, more of the parochial school systems—at precisely the point, unfortunately, when it is no longer Sisters but laywomen who begin to make up the majority of teachers.

Actually it is not Elizabeth Seton's role in the school system, or even in founding an order of Sisters, that makes her a saint. Nor does it suggest her as a model for feminists, for she worked from a male invitation and under male direction. It is her interior life—the spiritual quality that made the Archbishop of Baltimore invite her to Maryland—that we must confront. The old two-volume collection of her letters and journal, edited in 1869 by her grandson-bishop, gives us Elizabeth. She was a nineteenth-century lady, with charm, taste, a talent for love and friendship, and the piety of her day. But she was also her own woman. She spent Christmas Eve of 1803 sitting by the side of her husband dying of tuberculosis, and recorded in her journal:

"At midnight he awoke and observed I had not gone to rest. I said 'No, love, for the sweetest reflections keep me awake; Christmas day is begun, the day of our Redeemer's birth.' 'Yes,' he said, 'and how I wish we could have the Sacrament.' 'Well, we must do all we can,' and putting a little wine in a glass, I said different parts of the Psalms and some prayers which I had marked, and we took the cup of Thanksgiving, setting aside the sorrow of time in the view of eternity."

Elizabeth Seton, beloved sister, remain with us.

(*Arlene Swidler, author of* Woman in a Man's Church *[Paulist Press], is managing editor of the* Journal of Ecumenical Studies.)

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WHAT SOLZHENITSYN MEANS

JOHN LUKACS

A prophet about the past, not about the future

Alexander Solzhenitsyn is a man whose time has come, which is something quite different from An Idea Whose Time Has Come. In the twentieth century Ideas Whose Time Has Come are usually no good because of the very falseness of their gestation. They are mass-produced by publicity.

Liberals are beginning to be uneasy about Solzhenitsyn. They are right: Solzhenitsyn is the kind of man whom liberals instinctively fear. He is a man on a white horse. Only he is not a Captain, General, or Dictator, he is a prophet on a white horse, riding not for power but for truth. Unlike the liberals' bogey of a man on a white horse (wrong, again: had Hitler ridden a white horse? Had Mussolini?) the only crowds whom Solzhenitsyn encounters are hordes of photojournalists, the piranha-fish of verities, enemies rather than friends of Truth. Still he is unique in the twentieth century: an intellectual who means what he says—not an Avant-gardist but himself *the* lone avant-garde, a rider whose very figure is full of meaning at a time when nearly every other figure is meaningless. Ergo: his time has come.

He is an unusual prophet, a prophet about the past, not about the future. He is obsessed with history, not with utopia or with apocalypse. He is plagued by the quest for truth even more than by the quest for justice —which in itself is remarkable, considering where he had come from and where and why he had suffered. This obsession with history is remarkably un-Russian and remarkably novel. I shall return to it at the end of this article.

One of the remarkable matters about a work such as the *Gulag Archipelago* is that Solzhenitsyn tells us little that we did not already know. By "us" I mean those people who have not kept their eyes and their ears closed when it had come to the record of Stalin's (and Lenin's) brutalities in the Soviet Union. There are, of course, certain horrid details of Soviet crimes which are printed first in Solzhenitsyn's book. But so far as sheer quantity, the catalogue of Stalin's misdeeds, etc., goes, Solzhenitsyn's works add little to the already extant evidence. But, then, the work of a prophet, and even that of a responsible historian, is not a matter of addition, of quantity. There is a quality in Solzhenitsyn's writing about the past which is characteristically unique —and it is *not* the quality of his *style*.

The *Gulag Archipelago* is something very different from the records and personal accounts about the prison-land of the Soviet Union. It is not easy to read; and only after a certain effort does one become aware that this is something more than an assiduous summation of the brutalities (it is that, too) the elusive record of which had been plaguing Solzhenitsyn. It fulfills, rather, the function that Dr. Johnson had in mind when he said that people "need to be reminded more often than they need to be instructed."

And there are many other kinds of open—open, not hidden—clues to the thinking of this man, whose time has come. In this sketch of an article I shall list some of them in this order: what he says about the Russians, what he says about the Germans, what he means for us.

* * *

What Solzhenitsyn says about the Russians cannot be adequately condensed in an article, and perhaps not even in a book. He is neither an internationalist, nor a na-

JOHN LUKACS, *known for his history of the Cold War, is the author of* Historical Consciousness (*Harper & Row*).

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tionalist but a true writer-patriot. Patriots who are not nationalists: Orwell on the Left, Bernanos on the Right, rarities in Russia, and perhaps also in the United States. Solzhenitsyn's affections are neither sentimental-racial (like Dostoevsky's) nor abstract (like the liberals'). He loves his native country and his native people but he is fully aware of their awful shortcomings. He pronounces terrible words against them: "Our habit of obedience, our bent (or broken) backbone, did not suffer us either to reject the method of gangsters or even to be enraged by it."

"We have lost *the measure of freedom.* We have no means of determining where it begins and where it ends. We are an Asiatic people."

"By now we are even unsure whether we have the right to talk about the events of our own lives."

Solzhenitsyn is not a democrat and not an aristocrat. He is not a populist and not an elitist. He writes despairingly of the Russian proletariat, so often idolized by Bolsheviks or by nationalists—of the conformist proletarians under the Soviets who "knew nothing and, more importantly, didn't want to know anything." When the liberal despairs of the masses he attributes to them an inability to think—the illusory concomitant thereof being: educate them (in liberal intellectual categories, of course) and they will know how to think. But Solzhenitsyn points not at the inability but at the unwillingness of people to think—a profound difference.

> We forget everything. What we remember is not what actually happened, not history, but merely that hackneyed dotted line they have chosen to drive into our memories by incessant hammering.
>
> I do not know whether this is a trait common to all mankind, but it is certainly a trait of our people.

Elsewhere: "We didn't love freedom enough."

"Those who do not know history are condemned to repeat it." The famous Santayana maxim applies to Russians more than to any other people of the white race.

But does the intelligentsia in the West know how to remember the past? Are they not, rather, masters in retwisting and returning to their own illusions and legends? This rhetorical question is mine, not Solzhenitsyn's. It was because of Stalin, because of Stalin's holy name that Solzhenitsyn, then an army captain, had dared to utter in vain, that Solzhenitsyn, stripped and beaten, went from prison to prison. And gradually he came to a conclusion that differs profoundly from the accepted ideas of the Western intelligentsia and even from that of the Russian liberal anti-Stalinists: Lenin and Trotsky were not much better than the Georgian tyrant. And during the great Stalin purge trials the Leninist and the Trotskyist "defendants" were among the most despicable, because the most cowardly, of victims. "If you study in detail the whole history of the arrests and trials of 1936 to 1938, the principal revulsion you feel is not against Stalin and his accomplices, but against the humiliatingly repulsive defendants—nausea at their spiritual baseness after their former pride and implacability." So much for the thesis that the truly believing Communists among the defendants went through the motions of their "confessions" because of their spiritual fortitude, because of their unbroken loyalty to the cause of the Party—the thesis that made Arthur Koestler famous and rich.

Russian, German Comparison

And here we come to another matter: the comparison between Russians and Germans, between their prisons and camps, between NKVD and Gestapo. Several times Solzhenitsyn says that the methods of the Russian police were more stupid and more brutal than those of the Gestapo. When the liberal reads something like this he winces: for, to him, after everything that has happened, after everything has been said, Communists cannot be worse than Fascists; Communism will always deserve at least the benefit of doubt, Fascism never; because Fascism is a Total Lie, whereas Communism is a Half-Truth, a Truth corrupted by practice. Now Solzhenitsyn says something different. He says (and he ought to know) that Communism is a Lie, from beginning to end. He does not say that Nazism was a Half-Truth, and that therefore even Nazism was preferable to Communism.* (A half-truth is worse than a lie because its natural appeal is greater.) Solzhenitsyn does not say what we, in the West, must admit: if one proceeds from the utilitarian, the liberal, the pragmatic principle of the greatest happiness for the greatest number, then even Hitler (not to speak of Mussolini) comes out much better than Lenin or Stalin. The former provided a kind of modest prosperity for the mass of their peoples; the rule of the latter meant protracted material misery for their

*We must remark, however, that Solzhenitsyn has a good deal of respect for the Germans–for the German people, for their culture, for their qualities. This emerges clearly from many of his character descriptions in *1914*. It is probably typical of Solzhenitsyn's background. The Bolshevik revolution largely eliminated the cosmopolitan, and Francophile, element among educated Russians. The respect and admiration for things German lived on in the Soviet Union (Stalin shared it, too). There is a footnote in the *Gulag Archipelago* the oddity of which has probably escaped its author. In 1941 Stalin had most Germans living in Russia deported to the east. "They judged blood by family name. The design engineer Vasily Okorokov had found it inconvenient to sign his drawings with his real name. Consequently in the thirties, when it was still legally possible, he had changed his name to Robert Shtekker. It was elegant, and he was able to work up a good-looking professional signature with it. Now he was arrested as a German . . ." Okorokov may have been grotesque (I do not know Russian) but was Shtekker *elegant*? The aspirations of Okorokovs who wanted to become Shtekkers: the tragedy of much of the Soviet Russian intelligentsia. Life, said Swift, is not a farce; it is a ridiculous tragedy, which is the worst kind of composition.

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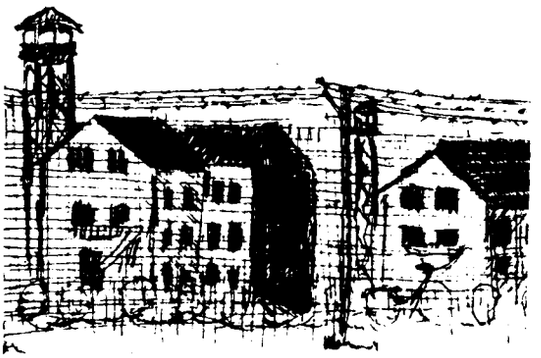
peoples. For every German who perished in the prisons of the Gestapo at least one hundred Russians perished in the prisons of Lenin and Stalin. Only if one does *not* proceed from the pragmatic, the positivist, the statistical, the scientific, the quantificative principle is one allowed to state that Hitler committed a crime that was even greater than Stalin's, since he allowed for a plan to exterminate—exterminate, not merely imprison, or deport—an entire group of people, the Jews of Europe and of Russia.

There remain secret and obscure matters in the relations between Hitler and Stalin, about which we shall probably never know the truth beyond those snatches of remarks dropped by either of them to their confidants, revealing that they had a great respect, and even admiration, for each other. It is even possible that they maintained some kind of secret contact with each other for many years, stretching into the war. There is some reason to believe that Stalin's decision to get rid of the Old Bolsheviks may have been stimulated by his admiration of the way in which Hitler got rid of the Old Nazis in his purge in 1934. And there is a description, in the *Gulag Archipelago*, of the arrival of prisoners in the



Arctic prison camp of Magadan on May 2, 1938, the ceremony and the organization which, to the best knowledge of this writer, were to be repeated rather exactly by the Germans in Auschwitz more than four years later. The prisoners were greeted by an orchestra of prisoner musicians. The orchestra played waltzes and marches. Then the authorities examined them naked to determine their fitness for labor. Then they would be taken to a bath. Here the parallel ends. There were no gas chambers in Magadan. (Most of the prisoners were allowed to freeze to death). But the parallel between these practices of reception and of deception are so astonishingly similar to the practices recorded by the survivors of Auschwitz that there is more than one reason to believe that some of Himmler's police technicians may have studied, and borrowed from their Soviet colleagues—a subject which, for once, liberals should be capable of investigating.

We know about the Magadans and the Auschwitzes (and many of us shudder and refuse to read much about them). We find them significant because they exemplify the most extreme forms of political or racial persecutions practiced by the police state, of terror as an element of politics. There is, however, even more to this matter. The Soviet and the German prison camps emerge, in retrospect, as potential microcosms of post-modern* society: and one can sense this from Solzhenitsyn.

We must understand that the worst crimes against persons in the Soviet Union (and also in Germany toward the end of the Third Reich) were committed *not* (or, rather, not principally) in the service of ideology but in the name of state security. (To a far lesser, but by no means insignificant extent this has been true also of Nixon and of his minions, who eventually came to believe that their illegal activities, the original motive of which had been political and ideological, were not only justified, that they were essentially matters for national, i.e. state, security.) The most brutal and the most savage of the guards were not convinced Communists, and not even convinced Stalinists (just as Haldeman and Ehrlichman were not convinced conservatives or even Right-wingers) but people who enjoyed the nearly absolute power they had over other people. This does not mean that they were psychotic sadists (though many of them were), nor would there be anything very new in the relationship of the rulers to the ruled, except for one condition: the rulers knew that they were living in a world where the older standards of civilization had ceased—and not only temporarily—to exist.

This is what I mean by a post-modern world, and this is what I mean by saying that in one essential sense the Gulag, like Auschwitz, was a microcosm of modern society. In the German camps the men whom the prisoners hated and feared most were the so-called "Kapos": killers, murderers, thieves rising—that is the proper verb—from the ranks of the prisoners who then came to lord it over the rest of the prisoners. As in the German, in the Russian camps the "ordinary"—perhaps we should say, "extraordinary"—criminals, convicted murderers and thieves, were privileged compared to the other, political or racial, prisoners. But their privileged state was not the result of ideological preference. It grew out naturally, from the very condition of things. The administrators of the prison camps needed accomplices among their victims. The most natural of accomplices were the criminals: because they were tough; and because they were utterly devoid of any conviction above the impulses of savagery, that is, above the savage law of the jungle. And it was precisely because of this condition, of a kind of savage opportunism, that the

*In 1945 there was a vogue of Stendhal's *Charterhouse of Parma* among the New York liberal *literati* who kept writing essays in *Partisan Review* about *Charterhouse of Parma* as a literary paradigm of totalitarian society. Their feeble minds could not grasp that Stendhal had depicted a *pre-modern* tyranny, something essentially different from a *post-modern* one.

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Kapos were the natural allies of the German, and the Russian criminals the natural allies of the Soviet, administrators.

In the German system the Kapos, though powerful, were relatively few. In the Russian system they were almost a state within a state. As the excellent Translator's Notes in the *Gulag* sum it up: "The Russian thieves are not just plain ordinary thieves, but constitute a whole underworld subculture which gets much attention and is well described in this book." They have their own laws and their own language—much more extensive than the *argot* of criminals in the West. There are many reasons to believe that this underworld subculture within the Soviet Union is enormous, and nearer to the surface of power than we are accustomed to think, and that in the event of a great breakdown this underworld, rather than some kind of political opposition, may flood the surface of that vast country.

A new kind of feudalism, that is: the tough will rule the weak, even if the latter are the large majority. When order has broken down, savagery pays. There are certain elements in the populations of the West who already sense that savagery is no longer merely a desperate recourse in desperate situations, the lowest possible action by the lowest. For many years and generations muggings and all kinds of crimes have been occurring in the back streets of American cities such as New York: but perhaps there is a difference now, a difference not only in the rapidly growing number of crimes but in the growing sense in the mind of the criminal. He is no longer a *criminal*: he is a *tough*. The black kid mugging or even slaying a peaceable citizen on a street of the world metropolis in the 1970's probably *knows* in his bones that he is doing something that has become perfectly natural, just as the Kapos and their Russian equivalents ("blatari," "urki," ugolovniki"*) knew that their blackmailing and tyrannizing, that is, their absolute physical domination of the other prisoners, was perfectly natural. They, too, were no longer "criminals" in the sense of pariahs, the lowest outcasts of civilized society. *This* society was something else. They were no longer the lowest. They had slaves of their own. They were toughs.

And when sheer power rules, unmasked by contractual rules, when the dissolution of habitual civilization reaches a certain level, a kind of tacit cooperation between criminals and police comes into existence, again quite naturally, because the tough respect each other more than they respect the weak—just as the privileged position of the Kapos within the German camps came into existence not through planning or administrative decisions but as a natural matter of things, just as the privileged position of the Russian underworld and their cooperation with the "overworld" came into existence naturally. In our American cities this may still lie in the future but it is perhaps closer than we think.

We have been thinking for a long time about the relationship of Liberty and Equality. Some of us have realized that the progress of both ideas is by no means parallel, and that a one-sided emphasis on equality may destroy whatever liberties survive in the developing democratic world. This is what Tocqueville, who was ten times more humane, and a thousand times more profound than Marx, tried to tell us: but our problem in the future may no longer be the Tocquevillean one, of how to work for a better balance, for the proper compound of liberty and equality. For the world that Solzhenitsyn drew is different: it is governed by the compound not of liberty and equality but of tyranny and anarchy, its very daily life being ruled by a savage mixture of both.

In any event Solzhenitsyn has few illusions about the West which, even though not fatally stricken as its enemies proclaim, is sick with its own sickness. "If we are concerned with solving mankind's moral problems," he recently wrote, "the prospect of convergence [between the Soviets and the West] is a somewhat dismal one: if two societies, each afflicted with its own vices, gradually draw together and merge into one, what will they produce? A society doubly immoral through cross-fertilization."

* * *

In spite (or, perhaps, because) of his deep sense of tragedy Alexander Solzhenitsyn thinks that Russia *has much to look forward to* (which is something different from optimism, of course.) "The return passage," he recently wrote, "which our country will soon face—the return of breathing and consciousness, the transition from silence to free speech—will prove a difficult and slow and painful process" but he thinks it will come. He may be wrong about this in the short run, which is rather irrelevant, because he is, as I said before, a new kind of prophet, a prophet about the past. He knows that the past, unlike the future or even the present, is not an illusion, it is *real*. It is the only thing that we know, and the only thing that we should know. To understand something about the present through an understanding of certain truths from the past—this is Solzhenitsyn's life-work.

It is a very unusual one, for a Russian. Historical consciousness is not a deep-rooted inclination of the Russian mind. Many critics have compared Solzhenitsyn to Tolstoy, especially in view of the former's *1914*. They are quite wrong. Whatever the virtues of Tolstoy as a writer-artist (a painter with words) his interest in history was astonishingly narrow-minded and his un-

*It is probably significant that in Russian thief-language thieves are often called "tsvetnye," i.e. "colored." "And a 'poltsvetnoi'—half-colored or mulatto—is a non-thief who had begun to take up the ways of the thieves.

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derstanding of history was incredibly shallow. This is not the place to argue this point which should emerge clearly from many passages (and, indeed, the very concept) of *War and Peace*—and not only from its philosophical appendix as Isaiah Berlin, a sleek fat sophist, once suggested in a little book* that made *him* famous and rich. *War and Peace* is a historical novel—with all of the limitations of what was essentially a nineteenth-century genre. The story is in the foreground, history serves as an—admittedly gigantic—background. Now

what Solzhenitsyn is trying to do is the very opposite. For him history *is* the foreground not the background; it *is* the main subject not the secondary one; it *is* the matter most worth describing. And it is not only that Solzhenitsyn's philosophy of history is the very opposite of Tolstoy's, who was a rigid and obsessed 19th-century determinist, whereas Solzhenitsyn is a deep believer in free will.** It is that Solzhenitsyn has been struggling with the problem of a new prose genre which is essentially historical. The most evident example of this is *1914*, the first part of a planned trilogy. It is too early to say whether his 1914-1917 trilogy will result in a new genre.*** It is not too early to say that both Solzhenitsyn's approach and the depth of his quest in history represent a tremendous step forward. It marks an advance of Russian historical consciousness which is way ahead not only of Tolstoy but also of the most "modern"**** and Westernized minor Russian geniuses, such as Biely or Nabokov.

Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago, 1914* and the *Gulag* are very different works but they have one thing in common. They reject the Bolshevik Revolution from the very beginning. It did not merely *go* wrong, it *was* wrong from the very beginning. It was not a dramatic revolution of idealists that later degenerated into the tyranny of Stalin. The entire revolution was a mistake; and the Russian people will not be free until they come to terms with this very historical fact. Instead of being a wave of the future, Communism kept Russia backward, within an antiquated system. Its symbol, in *Dr. Zhivago*, was the creaking old trolley-car, breaking down every few minutes, with its closed windows, within which Yuri Zhivago felt imprisoned, breathless, within which he suffered his heart attack and died. To Solzhenitsyn all of Marxism, not to speak of Leninism, is a "heap of antiquated rubbish." He has nothing but contempt for its rigid nineteenth-century determinism, with its fake-scientific pretensions. This is why Solzhenitsyn is the surviving *avant-garde*, and not the intelligentsia in the West. He has left not only Stalinism and Leninism but Marx, Darwin, Tolstoy leagues behind.

So Solzhenitsyn is a witness with a desperate will, a will to break through to history. And it is possible that he is an unwitting example* of something even more important: of the possibility that, contrary to all superficial appearances, and contrary to the accepted ideas of idiots and academic intellectuals, East or West, we are at the beginning of an immense unfolding of historical consciousness: that history, instead of a mainly academic discipline, is becoming a recognizable form of thought. It is even possible that in the rhetorical and literary evolution of the consciousness of the Western world the era of poetry and the era of prose may be succeeded by an era of history. This is too large a matter to discuss here, but I could not forego mentioning—or, rather, drawing attention—to it. Just consider:

It is easier to write mediocre prose than mediocre poetry
It is more difficult to write great prose than great poetry
It is easier to write a mediocre history than a mediocre novel
It is more difficult to write a great history than a greater novel.**

And that is what Alexander Solzhenitsyn is trying to

*_The Hedgehog and the Fox_ (1954).

**This is also true of *Dr. Zhivago.*

***One of the disconcerting elements in the style of *1914* is Solzhenitsyn's technique of using newspaper-clippings and film-style directives, reminiscent of Dos Passos' *U.S.A. 1919*, and that is old hat. On the other hand his obsession with the portraiture of history is much more profound than the artistic purpose of Dos Passos which was essentially journalistic.

****The quotation-marks are not incidental. "Modern" was a phenomenon mainly of the Twenties. We live (and write, and read) in what is essentially a post-modern age.

*Dionysius Halicarnassus (and Bolingbroke): "History is philosophy teaching by example." To which I add: and the examples are *real.*

**"Mencken said in a quip that the historian is a frustrated novelist: but one must read Tolstoy to find how, rather, the novelist may be a frustrated historian . . . There have been more great novels than great histories. Probably this is why the Western world is yet to see the appearance of a truly classic historian, a historian Dante, a historian Shakespeare." John Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness.* Published in 1968, this was first thought more than a decade before: and many things that have happened since have come to confirm this conviction in my mind.

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do, even though he may not be quite aware of the meaning of his purpose.

* * *

What will become of Alexander Solzhenitsyn in the West? We must admit that the following is possible: he may have been a bright, a momentarily illuminating flash of light. (Of course, when darkness rules, we must be thankful for what we get. A brief flash is better than no flash at all.) It is more than possible that the massive powers of stupidity—both in Russia and in the West—will prevail for a long time. If so, the only hope that we may nourish in Solzhenitsyn's regard is the probability (and in the event of an extreme collapse of order and of civilization it is not even more than that) that at some future time Solzhenitsyn will be read by his countrymen with the kind of respect they read the writings of other manly and distinguished exiles of another age.

All of this is probable. There are many things that point that way. We are told that we live in a revolutionary age. But a thoughtful future historian of the twentieth century might recognize that, in reality, this has been a century of extraordinary intellectual stagnation. The main ideas current among intellectuals fifty, sixty years ago, at the beginning of the century, were those exemplified by Marx, Darwin, Freud. Now, nearing the end of the century, the same thing. Or consider world politics. The destiny of most of the once civilized world has remained frozen, it has not really changed, for thirty years at least. In 1945, for all practical purposes, the United States and the Soviet Union divided Europe, and the Far East, among themselves. The explosion of the two atomic bombs over Japan that year, instead of inaugurating a new age, rigidified the then already existing unnatural division of the world. During the last thirty years no one dared to use, or even to brandish, these impossible weapons, the very possession of which rendered Britain impotent and the United States nearly so. The Soviet Union governed by tyranny, the United States by an ever more centralized bureaucracy; Europe divided, Germany divided, Berlin divided in two; the Europeans without power, Britain declining, materialism omnipotent in the West and its intellectual categories dominating all public thinking in America as well as in Russia—no essential change during thirty years, no essential change visible in the future. So much for those who prate that we live in a revolutionary age, of unprecedented change, to which the minds of many people cannot accustom themselves. The very opposite is true.

But, then, something happened in 1945, in a most unlikely place: in the pine forests of East Prussia, forsaken by God, surrounded by the debris of war, under the cap of a Soviet captain, into the grey fur of which the metallic red star is deeply impressed. Something had crystallized in his head. A cold and crystalline thought which, through the mysterious alchemy of the human mind, was produced by the passionate heat of intensity. It eventually led this man far, far enough to reject the entire mental system in the world in which he was born and in which he lived, to the point where the very rulers of that enormous empire began to worry about him and to fear him, while to millions of other people he became that new thing, a Light From The East. Truly a single event in a single mind may change the world. It may even bring about—and not merely hasten—the collapse of the Communist system, which is inevitable, though only in the long run. If so, the most important event in 1945 was not The Dawn of the Atomic Age but the sudden dawning of something in the mind of a ragged Soviet officer, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, in the East Prussian marshes and woods, compared to the importance of which the two flashes of the two atom bombs were but ephemeral feats of technology.

The great, the profound Bernanos wrote, also in 1945: "What if life really were the free thought of this world, this world which appears to be controlled and determined? Life, that is to say that mysterious and immaterial energy to which modern physics reduces matter itself."

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JACK LINDEMAN

BREATH

Here are names,
people circling me like stars
with no place to go
& gestures in dark windows
the moon keeps beating against in vain.

Whatever opens is a door
with nothing but bareness
growing behind it;
sand perhaps
& a stem deflowered.

Winter has tumbled
like an old man made of snow,
the broomstick splintered
& the black of his eyes
merely coal on the hard ground.

The ocean is tremulous against the beach
& the moon breaks into pieces
beneath the weight of the sky,
yet I tell you, no page can hold
within the boundary of its ink
a purer gesture than breath.

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'What I think about the Roman Catholic Church'

Second in a Series

THE 'CATHOLIC' CATHOLIC PROBLEM

LEO PFEFFER

There used to be a standing joke in my family. Whenever I felt that my daughter should not have something she wanted she threatened to marry a Catholic army officer from Alabama. Andrew Greeley expressed somewhat the same idea in a syndicated column published in 1971 after the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional laws providing state funds for parochial schools. "The justices," he said, "are not anti-Catholic in the way the Nativists or the Know Nothings of a century ago were (although I should not be inclined to make the same charitable judgment about Leo Pfeffer)."

My daughter was young, and perhaps not too smart. But Andrew Greeley is a wise and careful scholar and should know better. I was too young to vote in the 1928 election, but I wept when Al Smith lost. I voted for John Kennedy in 1960 and would have, with some reservations, voted for Robert Kennedy in 1968, had he been nominated. I would vote, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, for Robert Drinan, Justice William Brennan, Eugene McCarthy, Senator Philip and/or Jane Hart, Dorothy Day, Theodore Hesburgh, and almost any member of the editorial board of *Commonweal*, although I would not necessarily want my daughter to marry them.

The point is that one may disagree with a position felt strongly about by the Catholic Church and by most Catholics without being an anti-Catholic bigot, just as one may disagree with America's policy in respect to Israel without being an anti-Semite. I go further and suggest that one is not necessarily anti-Semitic because he does not like the State of Israel nor anti-Catholic because he does not like the Catholic Church, even though there is strong and practically universal identification between Jews and the State of Israel and Catholics and the Church.

My daughter's error was less egregious than Greeley's, for the truth of the matter was that I did not like the Catholic Church as I did not like the military and the South, and for pretty much the same reasons. In the first place, it stood for what I opposed, and opposed, or at best was neutrally silent, about what I stood for. My first confrontation with a position taken by the Church occurred while I was at law school. In the course of studying the decisions of the Supreme Court declaring anti-child-labor laws unconstitutional, I learned that efforts to overrule them by constitutional amendment failed because of opposition by what I deemed the unholy alliance of the National Association of Manufacturers and the Catholic Church. The latter justified its opposition on the ground that the amendment would infringe upon parental rights, but to me a more plausible explanation was the Church's natural affinity with the economic haves against the have-nots. (I vividly remember when, some two decades later, Cardinal Spellman led shovel-carrying seminarians into a cemetery to break a grave-diggers' strike for a living wage.)

I found it difficult to understand why the Church could not silence Father Coughlin; ultimately it did, but until then I suspected that basically it agreed with him. (Had he said what I would have liked to hear, I probably would have condemned the Church if it tried to silence him—but who said critics have to be consistent?) I considered ignoble the part it played in shaping American policy in respect to the Spanish civil war. To me the Church was much too nationalist, a stance immortalized by Cardinal Spellman's response to a question regarding his position of the United States in Vietnam: "I fully support everything it does."

Until Pearl Harbor the Church was apologetic in respect to Italian fascism and practically mute concerning Naziism. In the fifties it was the bedrock of McCarthy's power. During that period it was widely believed that if a civil servant whose loyalty (as the term was then defined) was under investigation brought a testimonial letter from his priest, that ended the matter; if it came from his minister, it was put in his file and considered with other character references; if it came from his rabbi, it was thrown into the wastebasket. I was ambivalent about this, indignant that it should be so, yet somewhat pleased that the underlying assumption was probably correct.

I could not understand the great silence of the Church on the civil rights revolution of the fifties and early sixties. Perhaps my memory is at fault, but I do not remember any year when the annual statement of the National Catholic Welfare Conference was devoted to the subject of equality for blacks. I was moderately active in the civil rights movement during this period and my recollection, fallible as it is, was that there was

LEO PFEFFER *is the well-known constitutional lawyer. His latest book is* God, Caesar and the Constitution (*Beacon*).

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a general consensus that the Catholic Church was dragging its feet.

But it was not only for what it stood for and did not stand that I did not like the Catholic Church; I did not like it because it was monolothic and authoritarian and big and frighteningly powerful. I was repelled by the idea that any human being could claim infallibility in any area, much less in the universe of faith and morals, and repelled even more by the arrogance of condemning to eternal damnation those who did not believe it. (How do you make yourself believe the impossible? The Queen in Alice's Wonderland claimed she sometimes believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast, but I'm sure Alice didn't believe her.)

The Pope does not have a monopoly on the prerogative of infallibility; it is enjoyed to a degree that even Pius IX would have envied by many hassidic rabbis. The difference is that the hassidim of one rabbi need not accept—and indeed vigorously deny—the infallibility of other rabbis, and the overwhelming majority of Jews, who are not hassidim and in fact not Orthodox, deny the infallibility of any rabbi, and this without fear of excommunication or loss of salvation. Therein lay the basic difference between the Catholic Church and Orthodox Judaism or fundamentalist Protestantism; in the latter instances, orthodoxy was but one of many voices reflecting the faith, in the former there were no alternatives.

The Church was monolithic not only in its doctrines but in its instrumentalities. On the way from the subway station to my office I daily passed a parochial school, and often saw the children in the street lined up in separate classes as they marched in. All the children were white; each group was monosexual; all the boys wore dark blue trousers and white shirts, all the girls dark blue jumpers and white blouses; all the teachers were white and all wore the same nuns' habit.

With monolithity goes authoritarianism. As a doctrinaire there-is-to-good-war-or-bad-peace type pacifist, there is nothing about the military that I like, but next to the fact that its business is killing people what I like least about it is its authoritarianism. Yet, I could understand the obligation of obedience in the military; when the enemy is charging you cannot take a vote on whether to fight or retreat. Religion, however, is something else again. I could never accept the Church's demand that all priests take a lifelong oath of obedience; such control of one human being over the life and liberty of another was abhorrent to me. I was aware of the conscience escape clause; the military too has an escape clause: soldiers are required to obey only the lawful orders of their officers. I was aware too that in the Church there was an option not present in the military: a priest could always take off his Roman collar and walk out. But this misses the point, which is that a church has no right to demand such an oath of obedience.

Just as I believed that the state must be the servant and not the master of the people, so I believed that the church should be the servant of the faithful, not their master. To me the only good church was a congregational one. In reading the accounts of the many congregation vs. priest and bishop battles in the 19th century I always rooted for the former, but the latter always won.

Bigness, too, was a bugaboo to me. Nixon and the ITT may be right; bigness itself may not be badness. Bigness is neutral; it can be used for good as well as for evil. I have, however, an uneasy feeling that its capacity for evil outweighs its capacity for good. The Catholic Church was not merely big; it claimed and strove to be catholic. I did not like a catholic Catholic Church any more than I would have liked a catholic Protestant, Jewish or Islamic church.

Voltaire said that "If there were one religion in England, its despotism would be terrible; if there were only two, they would destroy each other; but there are thirty, and therefore live in peace and happiness." Madison echoed the thought. "Security for civil rights," he said, "must be the same as for religious rights; it consists in the one case in a multiplicity of interests and in the other in a multiplicity of sects." I agreed with both.

Finally, the Church was politically powerful; it was for good reason that the Chancery in New York was known as the Powerhouse. In my early years as a strug-

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gling practitioner of law I occasionally got a divorce case. At that time the only legal ground for divorce in New York was adultery and I soon learned of the sordidness and perjury that almost always accompanied this type of litigation. Everybody recognized it, but all efforts towards reform ran up against invincible Church opposition.

During the same period, I often found it necessary to defend Orthodox Jewish storekeepers who were summoned to court for violating the Sunday closing law. For almost two decades I worked with a large group of organizations, Jewish, Protestant and civic, to get the law changed to exempt Sabbatarians who kept their business closed on Saturdays. The only significant opposition came from the Catholic Church; but that was enough. Session after session bills were introduced, sent to committee and were never heard from again.

In 1964 President Johnson prevailed upon a reluctant Congress to enact a historic civil rights law which forbade racial and religious discrimination in voting, employment, public accommodations and education. One provision, Title VI, stated, in the formula used throughout the act, that no institution or program receiving federal funds shall discriminate on grounds of race, color, religion, or national origin. At the very last minute, without notice or debate, the word "religion" was deleted because its presence would prevent federal financing of Catholic parochial schools.

I could multiply instances—I have already noted the Church's veto of the anti-child labor amendment and of aid to Loyalist Spain—but I have indicated enough to explain my belief that during that period the Catholic Church was one of if not the single most powerful political force in the nation.

By "that period" I mean the years when Pius XI and Pius XII reigned over the Catholic world and Cardinal Spellman ruled in the United States. It was the pre-John XXIII-Vatican II era, and it was during this period that my feelings towards the Catholic Church were formed. What do I think about the Church today? In short, I still do not like it, but I do not like it less than I did not like it during that period, and the reason is that, while it is still what it was before, it is considerably less so, if you can make out what I mean.

For example, I do not like it that the American Church has, with barely a whimper, yielded to Vatican objection to the very sensible experiment of first communion before first confession. (I know it's none of my business, but you asked, didn't you?) I do not like it that the Church opposes the Equal Rights Amendment for women; that among the children outside the parochial school on the way to my office there are only a sprinkling of black faces, and none of the children, white or black, seems to be poor. I do not like it that papal infallibility and *Humanae Vitae* are still defended by the Vatican. I do not like it that the Catholic Church is flirting with the Anglican and Lutheran churches and no doubt others and will soon be ready to discard much doctrine including even infallibility, as part of the bride price for a union. I fear a universal Church, even a watered-down one. And there are many other things about the Church that I still do not like.

There is, however, a world of a difference between the Church of today and of 15 years ago. If the Equal Rights Amendment does not get the additional few states for adoption, it will not be because of Catholic Church opposition. New York, the state with the largest Catholic population in the nation, did reform its divorce law, did exempt Sabbatarians from the Sunday closing law, and was one of the few states in the Union to enact what was practically an abortion-on-demand law. (New York newspapers carry daily advertisements of abortion clinics; all the Church can do is to place and pay for its own advertisements offering an alternative to abortion. Try to imagine this in the days of Cardinal Spellman, who was able to banish from the city such an innocuous motion picture as *The Miracle*.)

Are there any things about the Church that I do like?

There are, and many too. Let me name a few.

1. Papal infallibility is de facto dead. I don't think any Pope will dare to try to exercise it in the future. Think of what would have happened had *Humanae Vitae* been pronounced *ex cathedra*.

2. Collegiality is the wave of the future. More important, it will seep down from the bishops to the priests and religious and thence to the faithful. The Magna Carta was originally given by King John to the nobles for their benefit alone, but ultimately it belonged to all the people. Priests and nuns are beginning to organize; so too, will congregations. Popular sovereignty will yet come to the Catholic Church.

3. The Church is purging itself of its extreme anti-Communism and ultra-nationalism. Cardinal Mindszenty was removed by the Vatican and the *New York Times* reported that the Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro denounced rigid anti-Communism and rejected charges of Communist infiltration of the Church. (That it should come to this!) In this country the only state that voted for McGovern was the one whose capital and largest city is Boston.

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4. *Humanae Vitae* or no *Humanae Vitae*, contraceptive family and population control is a recognized responsibility of Catholics, and this by and with advice and consent of the priests. Moreover, although Msgr. Stephen Kelleher lost his judicial post for saying so, divorce and remarriage are coming to Catholics, and this too will be with the advice and consent of the priests.

5. The Church is slowly but surely becoming aware that it has a social conscience. High prelates played a significant role in the success of the anti-Farrah boycott and are playing a similar role in the lettuce and grape boycotts. The Atonement Franciscan (Graymoor) Friars joined a Protestant-based coalition to vote their corporate stock against investment in South Africa. The Boston Archdiocese, in an effort to prevent its schools from becoming refuges for children of families seeking to escape racial integration in the public schools, has followed the example of other dioceses and declared a moratorium on transfers except at "normal entry" classes. (We Jews have long prided ourselves for our self-proclaimed leadership in the struggle for racial equality, but I am not aware of any Jewish parochial school which has closed its doors on pupils who are running not to God but away from blacks and Puerto Ricans.)

I could go on, but I've said enough to express my feelings about the Catholic Church today. It is going through a period of *sturm und drang*. It will emerge from it a different Church; it will be a human rather than a divine institution, or, to put it somewhat more felicitously, an institution whose divineness is measured by its humanness. The progress is irreversible; it is exciting, and I like it.

an exchange of views

'America and Crisis'

New Brunswick, N.J.

To the Editors: I am sickened by the baiting of the peace movement in Michael Novak's recent column "America and Crisis" [May 9]. I am also tired of Novak constantly obfuscating the place from which he speaks and trying so desperately to assume the position of objective, pained and neutral observer. Will he never stop speaking with the editorial "we" or talking of "us?"

Novak writes that he was "never so ashamed of America as during the last days of March, 1975, watching the long lines of refugees, the infants, the parents, the broken armies." Never so ashamed? Really! It is almost beyond my ability to control my anger when I hear such pathetic and calculated statements. Where was Novak the Christmas of 1972 as American B-52's visited one of many real bloodbaths upon the Vietnamese people? If there is any one time that I can point to being most ashamed of America it was then. But to point to that one example even is not enough, for there is shame upon the last ten, if not thirty, years of our history.

But more to the point still, does Novak not realize why he saw what he did upon television? Does he not realize that the horrors which struck him so in March 1975 were the daily reality of life in Vietnam long before that reel of film was taken in March 1975? Does he not realize that "the interpretive elite" of which he writes—and of which he fails to see he is a member—are telling us "what is happening and what is yet to be" in Vietnam for their own purposes and from their very real points of view?

Novak writes of the *New York Times* as if it was gospel, or even revelation. It is shocking that he would have the audacity to speak of that portion of South Vietnam governed by the Thieu clique as being "a remarkably unregimented and free society," merely on the word of a *Times* dispatch. I never thought I would read the words of such a craven apologist for the terror in the Vietnam ruled by Saigon in the pages of *Commonweal*.

Indeed, that is all Novak does in his article—take on the role of apologist for "the best and the brightest," a group of which he is obviously a member as much as he would like us to think him a neutral outsider. For Novak does not like the prospect of a revolutionary world. People rebelling against tyranny and imperialism frighten him; yes, Michael, it is *you* who are frightened, not necessarily us. Even in 1975, I get the impression that Novak only thinks the United States government miscalculated or used the wrong contingency plan in Indochina, not that our government was criminal, immoral and imperialist. He writes that the government chose "high technology and heavy armaments, instead of small cadres and rifle power, as the instrument of strategy. And that made the hundred year struggle too brutal to support." Is this to say that our motives were nice, but our methods too messy? What dualism is this that separates form and content? Should the war have been supported at all? That is the question!

Novak does not understand what is happening in this country or in the world anymore and he is upset. All the foundation money in the banks of his benefactors cannot provide a clue if he does not take his own advice

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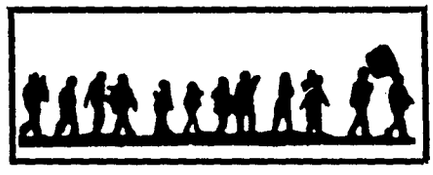
and "smell the air and see." For it is spring, a time of rebirth, a blossoming of change. He is afraid that neither "our strength nor our word inspires fear." And I say thank God! There is nothing to be valued in being fearsome. (Perhaps, Novak's mantle of machismo has slipped.) But perhaps we, as a nation, do hold out something new to the world—the example of a people turning their rulers back from a policy of death and destruction. Perhaps it will be perceived that the American people are not the same as the American government, and that the people's love—a love of life, liberty, peace and yes equality—inspires a strength with which we were able to resist the words of fear spoken by "the best and the brightest," by our government and by those like Michael Novak. Our republic is not "in greater danger than at any time in forty years," unless Michael has overheard some plotting against our nation from amongst his benefactors, a group whose words he speaks when he says "we ought to steel ourselves for worse to come." The people of America, though, can ready themselves for celebration in the revolutionary spirit of 1776 and join in the Vietnamese people's triumph over tyranny and imperialism with the knowledge that we, as a people, in the last ten years have begun to reclaim our revolutionary heritage in the resistance we as Americans waged to the policies of a corporate and military elite. Yes, Michael, you have smelled the air and seen, but you can no longer cloud our eyes and "shroud the world in gray" with your duplicitous words and disingenuous posturing of crisis. Neither your strength nor your words, Michael, inspires fear. And that is how it should be.

GARY MITCHELL

Minneapolis, Minn.

To the Editors: When I read Michael Novak's piece on the end of the war [May 9], I was again reminded of how unfortunate it is that he seeks to publish his views in a journal which has always been known for its clear moral vision. The truth about our involvement in Vietnam is that it was, from beginning to end, wrong by any moral standard worthy of the name. It is therefore simply not a morally tenable position to stand in the middle, as Novak does, and criticize those who opposed the war along with those who prosecuted it.

This is not to say that some of the opponents of the war are above criticism. It is true that some of them actually believed in the cause of Ho Chi Minh and thus were (and are) blind to the monstrous atrocities perpetrated by North Vietnam and the Viet Cong. But it is certainly unfair to imply, as Novak does, that the "peace movement" as a whole was unconcerned about the people of South Vietnam who did not want to live under the Viet Cong. The point is that the number of people so attached to us as to be possibly endangered by a Viet Cong takeover increased with our deepening and lengthening involvement. Besides, it became clear to "peace movement" types somewhat earlier than it did to other folks that the means needed



to achieve the end of saving some people from the Viet Cong were so grossly evil as to be unthinkable. (Unfortunately, they were not entirely unthinkable to the ones prosecuting the war.)

Novak's criticism of the idealization of North Vietnam by some of the war's opponents did not prevent him from idealizing the situation in South Vietnam. If South Vietnam was indeed a "remarkably unregimented and free society," it was so only for those who engaged in no political activity opposed to Thieu's government. All others were in danger of ending up in the tiger cages. It will not do to attempt to portray the numerous manifestations of the corruption of South Vietnam's ruling elite as harmless signs of that country's freedom. The generals and their wealthy patrons may have been free to be degenerates, but the rest of the population was strapped with the yoke of supporting the moneyed classes and their war.

I do not think that those who opposed the war have to answer for losing it or for the consequences of losing it. If American foreign policy is in trouble in the aftermath of the "fall" of southeast Asia, it is because that policy has been wrong and not because America was prevented from completely destroying the area in order to "win" the war there. Novak and others on the right ought indeed to be ashamed of America for what it did in southeast Asia. But they must not be permitted to shame those who opposed the war.

As for Novak's vicious and reprehensible attack on the news media (a scapegoat in the making?) at the end of his column, it can only be said that it was worthy of Spiro Agnew.

CHARLES F. KLINGER

Worcester, Ma.

To the Editors: Since I am also prone to making passionate statements, I am in no position to criticize Michael Novak on his diatribe, "America and Crisis," in your May 9 issue.

However, the list of his false statements, based as they are on such flagrantly deliberate misinformation, is too long to go unanswered.

1. He's ashamed of the U.S. government for running out on the South Vietnamese. He ignores the fact that the 1973 Paris Agreement made it absolutely clear to them that they were going to have to survive on their own with only our monumental materials (plus our military/technical support thenceforth disguised as civilian employees of U.S. contractors), not our GI's and pilots. Of course, neither they nor Thieu believed this and were bolstered in their misconception by Nixon's secret agreement with Thieu, as Lyndon Johnson had done secretly before Nixon. That Congress nullified this with the War Powers Act meant little to Thieu and his gang; after all, what dictator ever paid attention to any legislature? Is this the sort of leader Mr. Novak applauds?

2. He claims that our government, plus the right and the left, turned callously away from the humanity of the South Vietnamese people. I can't believe that Mr. Novak has forgotten the

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past decade's history so inhumanely. It was the peace movement of the left that finally convinced enough citizens and Congressmen to stop the bombing and the wasting and the killing of an entire civilization. Acts of inhumanity which were making huge profits for our capitalistic economy, for our "tiger-cage" builders, for our multi-national, military-industrial complex have come home to roost in inflation, unemployment and galloping welfare costs. Would M. Novak like all this suffering and destruction and blood-profit to continue?

3. He describes the Americans and their Vietnamese supporters as the good guys and the Viet Cong, North Vietnamese and Khmer Rouge as the bad. Perhaps M. Novak would have been more at home on a nice Southern plantation, with lots of restless slaves and a covey of Southern belles to despair with him over the coming of Emancipation and the end to Aryan privilege. Isn't it painfully obvious to even Massah Novak that our billions in military equipment and thousands of military people couldn't thwart the revolutionary aspirations of the majority of Asian peoples.

4. Eerily, he proposes that our government revive its bankrupt policy of Pax Americana and the role of world policeman until the Third World grow up to "liberty," American-style. He would have us reinstitute the Domino Theory in all its tarnished glory; he would, apparently, have our military-economic might continue to support the dictatorships that exist or existed in South Korea, Portugal, South America, for example. Israel should be scared to death that she has us for an ally, when this is the company we foster.

What I gather he is really saying is that our frail democracy, with its light shining around the world, is sustained only by military might willing to protect and enlarge its economic interests and power. Was that what our own Revolution was all about?

5. Yes, he's right in saying that few peoples trust our government anymore. Why should they, when what we proclaim as dire consequences for our "allies"—should they lose—turns out to be something quite different? I'm sure your readers can add up the body counts quite accurately in order to determine which race has been doing most of the killing of peoples, all colors, over the past 30 years, or whose weapons have been supplied to the killers. Your readers can also determine quite easily that the peoples of the Third and Fourth Worlds are the victims of the carnage now. For God's sake, let us stop.

6. And, the kind of foreign policy M. Novak prefers has infected many of us with its cancer: of seeing "national interest" in every place and situation that are really none of our business, of closing our doors to the remnants who came as refugees and accomplices from Cuba and South Vietnam, of paranoia that we must somehow restore our imperial primacy in some irrational, frantic fashion. Thankfully, there are some cool heads in Congress like McGovern and O'Neill, plus millions of resolute people in the many areas of the peace and equal rights movements who are not about to let our country be sold forever to the militarists and the multinational robber barons who have had their way with our government for so long.

Sorry for the passion in response, but I don't think this was what Reinhold Niebuhr had in mind at all, when he protested for liberty.

Nor does the usual editor when he dignifies the prominent spaces of his periodical with an essay that should have been relegated to the letters-to-the-editor section.

DANIEL E. DICK

Reply

It may be that everything my correspondents write is correct: None of the points they have raised is original; they voice the conventional wisdom of the "movement left," both in its pentecostal (Dick, Mitchell) and in its sober (Klinger) wings. Still, the manner of the American departure from Vietnam *was* both shameful and ominous.

I write this reply from Israel. I write it after attending the Slovak World Congress in Rome, and listening to exiles from around the world describe the political situation both in Eastern Europe and in their new lands. From abroad, the words of Solzhenitsyn in the U.S. ring like rare common sense.

My correspondents believe that they have been and are now defending a position that is moral, honorable, reasonable, and on the side of liberty and justice in the world. I think they are dreadfully mistaken. Indeed, the level of illusion, falsehood, misinformation, propaganda, naïveté and moral callousness in them is so high I hardly know how to respond. But since in political matters it is impossible to know for certain whose analysis of the situation is in fact correct, moral, and intelligent, maybe their attack on my reasonableness, morality, and grasp of reality is more to be believed than mine on theirs. I concede that. But there is a larger point.

If we who are members of the same social and educational elite in the U.S. so widely differ in our grasp of reality, how can we calculate how those not educated in our way nor by our media —Russians, Arabs, North Vietnamese, Chileans, Nigerians, Lithuanians, etc.— interpret Vietnam of March, 1975? I am more concerned about the meaning of Vietnam in such places than in Worcester, New Brunswick, and Minneapolis. World conflict arises because perceptions—and interests—are not in harmony.

I never believed that the United States intervention in Vietnam was in and by itself morally wrong; I believed it became immoral when its means became disproportionate to its ends. I never believed Thieu an admirable leader nor the only alternative in South Vietnam. Still, there are exceedingly few democracies in this world. In not a single communist nation, including North Vietnam, does a democracy exist. Thus, to say that Thieu was a dictator is not to say he was untypical of the vast majority of the world's 150 leaders. In his land, less free than ours,

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there were considerably more freedoms than in many others, including North Vietnam. It would be a large act of faith to assume that today there is greater freedom in South Vietnam than there was under Thieu. Freedom of speech, political dissent, and civil rights are not now practiced there more than before. The Vietnamese may have had enough of war, and may know reconciliation, without becoming as gray and lifeless as Eastern Europe. A certain skepticism about this does them honor.

Fact: the Buddhist church refused consistently to join the Viet Cong, and a vast majority of the Vietnamese also refused, even when they could have. If they did not like the Americans, they did not like the opposite option, either. When I visited Vietnam briefly in 1967, many described to me how it felt to be between the hammer and the anvil, as they put it. At the end, no popular uprising or Viet Cong revolt ended South Vietnam's independent history; the endgame was a massive invasion of the North Vietnamese army, equipped by Russia.

I am grateful that my correspondents call me by my first name, and speak to me as a friend. I do resent Mitchell's innuendos about "benefactors;" I held a job with the Rockefeller Foundation for twenty months, worked hard, built a new program, and resigned as planned eight months ago. I resent as well Klinger's accusation that I speak from the Right; I consider myself thoroughly a man of the Left. By contrast, the opinions expressed by my correspondents seem to me to be in the service of reaction: contributing to the spread of authoritarianism, injustice, brutality, and terror which relentlessly cover this planet like a shroud.

One of the high moral costs of the war in Vietnam, indeed, is the new and rigid orthodoxy which has grown up among those who now wrongly think of themselves as constituting the American Left. On the anti-war left, as in these letters, self-congratulation abounds, and self-criticism is a virtue more highly praised than practiced. Many cannot stand it when the criticism they so freely dispense to others is turned upon themselves.

Some make it seem as though the white race is the deepest source of moral and political evil on this planet, rather than as though it is involved in human evil as thoroughly as the other races, while yet having at least one cultural achievement to its credit: the establishment of the relatively most democratic and free political institutions on this planet, which set the standards of practice that others emulate. Some call nations of relative freedoms and justice the sources of oppression, which must be subverted and overcome, and call regimes that are frankly, openly, and publicly in denial of civil liberties, democratic procedures, a free press, and all the other basic human liberties, examples of "liberation" whose victories we ought to celebrate and assist. In such an orthodoxy, morality is not only excessively clear but has put even the large, vague things exactly backwards.

I was sickened, it is true, by the cruel Christmas bombing of Hanoi in 1972. It disturbs me even more to realize that they may be correct who say that that bombing, more than anything else, persuaded the North Vietnamese to negotiate as until then they had refused to do. My dismay at the disorderly collapse of U.S. policy in 1975 was of a wholly different order, on a different moral plane entirely; the nature of that collapse was of greater moral consequence to the world than any prior episode.

It is not plain that the democracies of Western Europe, Japan, Israel and a pitifully few other bright spots on this planet will survive until 1984, or that the United States will be a free nation thirty years from now. The outlook for liberty on this planet seems to me bleaker than at any time since the 1930's—and more subtly dangerous.

In taking a position that is *both/and* rather than *either/or*, and in trying to maintain a certain objectivity, I believe myself to be standing in the best traditions of the *Commonweal*, accepting wholesale the ideology neither of the Right nor of the Left.

MICHAEL NOVAK

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

DOM JULIAN STEAD

THE CATCH

No one, because
They each will pause
Looking only for You;
When he sees
Some other grinning face
Or frowning, each flees
Knowing nothing will do
Without Your grace.

In her they found You.
I too;
October find.
Do You mind
If I now sit or kneel
And weep for joy?
So long although
Ago
I took that meal
And only ate the peel
As though it were a toy.

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. . rooms where the lonely
are battered
Slowly like pebbles into fortuitous shapes.
The Capital

AGE BEFORE BEAUTY

MICHAEL NEWMAN

W. H. Auden
STEPHEN SPENDER, ed.
Macmillan, $14.95

Thank You, Fog
W. H. AUDEN
Random House, $6

ULTIMATE appraisal of the worth of W. H. Auden will be a process as complex as deciphering the chemistry of his time; his paradoxical devotions, apostasies of nationality and reversals of belief, emphasize the inconsistencies of his anxious age, and the geopolitical relativity of its values.

With Auden's death, the suit for assessment becomes more contentious, for it involves a matter of succession: we need to know the Master's dimensions before we can discover who might yet occupy his chair.

When Yeats died, Auden confronted this problem squarely:

Now he is scattered among a hundred cities
And wholly given over to unfamiliar affections,
To find his happiness in another kind of wood
And be punished under a foreign code of conscience.

Auden was perfectly right about how Yeats would meet judgment, and so eventually succeeded him—naturally assuming, it follows, that his own headstone would be similarly subject to the random ravages of change; but the proliferation, toward the end of Auden's career, of authorized not-quite biographies (starting with his own *A Certain World*), coupled with the posthumous proscriptions impressed upon his correspondence, seem, in current light, to be doing to prospective biographers what a lawyer might call leading the witness: in the deliberate stage-management of his aftertaste, has Auden as edited violated the oath by which he assumed Yeats' office when Eliot died?

The festschrift, *For W. H. Auden*, released by Random House in a limited edition of 500 on his 65th birthday, was, in effect, a hand-picked jury for posthumous criticism—and the present partisan public tribute further delays the prospect of a detached modern appraisal.

Stephen Spender, the book's editor, spoke recently to the effect that Auden at the end of his life was not a powerful influence on the young, that a man of 21 would not sit down and plan to write poems in the style of Auden.

Sitting and planning notwithstanding, Auden has in fact exerted a significant influence upon both Dylans, and the impact of his exemplary stanzas in universal translation is yet to be estimated. I've known Latin nostrils to which certain subtle grandeurs of Audenoid inflection were far more immediately registered than might have been the case with an English or American palate jaded by the *base mechanics* of *secular bread*-winning. And one wonders how the erstwhile *Audun* comes across in Iceland—perhaps Auden's true apostles and only critics await translation, or maturity.

Spender's scrapbook, if nothing of this kind, is the definitive gossip, and will be a relative must for the cosy few who can take the "Disenchanted Island" with a few grains of schmaltz; reading through its gallery of reflections of Auden by his personal contemporaries, I was struck with how the vacuum of the poet's persona pervades the wake of his passing from their midst.

All but the most articulate (mostly women) fairly swoon before the prospect of addressing directly the paradoxes which made this poet so compelling, and this man so more and more alone. When Spender's more critical aspect comes to bear, it comes in abeyance:

> . . in the same way, based on knowing him, one can feel fairly sure he would have been pleased with these tributes.
>
> Reading through them, they do suggest a few conclusions. One is that he was more unrecognizably different when old from when young, than are most people. Something of the extraordinary spontaneity of the young man was sacrificed, which was a bigger price than most of us can pay, in order that he might attain the isolation out of which he wrote his later work.

Beneath the cautious deference of these lines can be detected a certain irresolution, that snicker of anxiety we have, after Eliot, always associated with Auden, and have come to perceive in the forkings of Frost—that sense of something other than innocent organism manipulating the connotations of its organ.

In his poem YOU, which he was quite partial to, Auden addresses the flesh:

Oh, I know how you came by
A sinner's cranium,
How between two glaciers
The master-chronometer
Of an innocent primate
Altered its tempi:
That explains nothing.

Was Auden in his virtuosity the nemesis or unwitting accomplice of mechanism? It seems that somewhere along the way Auden, like Eliot, changed thematic (ethical) polarities, while continuing a line of structural

MICHAEL NEWMAN *is a poet and associate editor of the* Paris Review.

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(aesthetic) priority, which caused the poems, like the proverbial cracked Japanese Teacup (with its *lane to the land of the dead*), to develop a glacial cleavage between matter and manner, a bereftness he continues to lament in the concluding stanza of YOU:

Who tinkered, and why?
Why am I certain,
Whatever your faults are,
The fault is mine,
Why is loneliness not
A chemical discomfort,
Nor Being a smell?

Hannah Arendt comes closest to the quick of this question, in an essay which appeared earlier in the *New Yorker*:

> It seems, of course, very unlikely that young Auden, when he decided that he was going to be a great poet, knew the price he would have to pay. I think it entirely possible that in the end, when, not the intensity of his feelings and not the gift to transform them into praise, but the sheer physical strength of the heart to bear them and live with them, gradually faded away, he might have considered the price too high.

Brought to mind here is Kazantzakis' rendition of Christ in the grip of his Last Temptation, one which, as His four scribes bear witness, He survived.

In much of his later poetry Auden in the persona of the spirit repeatedly upbraids the flesh, that *over-familiar/ dense companion* which bound him from Ariel's *smoother song*—and so the later work became an ex-cathedra monologue of soul at self, while the latter man became the vector of these antagonisms.

His spontaneity of expression was further subjected to a Cartesian partition of life into autonomous spheres of work, prayer and carnival—each presumably perfected by separate rules, and consummated via non-valent rituals.

Anne Fremantle, in Spender's book, recalls:

> He seemed happy at Helensburgh, and I remember wondering why, it seemed to me a dour place. He told me: 'I enjoy teaching. And I like teaching small boys best.' I asked why and he replied that they could be taught to concentrate, and that one of the few things the human animal can learn to do is to learn to concentrate . . . Forty years later I reverted to the subject of teaching children, and Wystan added: 'Yes. I think what is important is to teach them the techniques of prayer. That is, the technique of paying attention and of forgetting oneself. . . . I think one has a chance with *every* child to teach them to concentrate.' I then commented that Bertrand Russell had told me he found the techniques of prayer enormously useful, and used them, though he did not believe in God. 'That has nothing to do with technique,' Wystan remarked.

Auden's technical view of poetry, his isolation and incorporation of its elements into vessels whose design bordered on the exponential, tended to diminish the rub of the elemental inconsistencies of his subject matter (Western Civilization), and to delegate his implication in its dichotomy to vague, benevolent processes of artistic or erotic absolution.

The ethical entropy of this basically mechanical gestalt-operation produced in his being a sort of discorporate *angst*, which demanded corporeal solutions—for Auden made no bones about flesh and surrender when somehow he let his *Last Poems* slip through an ode to anaesthetic complacency (better to have made a final appearance in Variorum—or in drag), a subliminal advocacy of Circe and Soma.

Just as one balks in the case of Spender's book at taking too much to task the work of its several literary amateurs, one must resist, in the case of these *Last Poems*, the temptation to get too judgmental or specific about what manner of spiritual matter is here evinced in what we must hope has been offered as some sort of musical joke.

I would have thought the unintentional comedy of the title, *Thank You, Fog*—with its unfortunate connotation of a *Prisoner's Chorus* in Dachau, and its equally regrettable susceptibility to low permutation (one Catholic newspaper, permuting high, actually reviewed it as *Thank You, God*)—might have convinced Auden's sacristan to burn these slim leavings instead of anything he might have said in his letters, which, however whatever, could never conspire to plagiarize his laurels as do these lame last words, this crown of conceit which so disfigures the portent of Augustus.

As one who knew him well enough, and whether or not it might have pleased him, I must say that there is not enough poetry, not enough Caesar in this salad to justify the expenditure of dollars or drachmas—unless you be among those Audenoids who must have the complete set.

If have it you must, then have it you shall, but remember: he shan't be able to sign it. Also be advised that these are Last Poems like certain gas stations are Last Chance gas stations: as Spender recently announced, only half of Auden's work has been published.

* * *

Poetry, as Auden wrote, again in his elegy for Yeats—

survives
In the valley of its saying where executives
would never want to tamper—

why then, we must not resist the conjecture, this tampering of executors? There are disquieting parallels discernible between the rationale which ordered Auden's letters burnt, and that of Executive Privilege—none, unfortunately, within the license of a reviewer of minor books, however poetic.

There is, however, in retrospect, a conspicuous suppression of Yeats' influence, of the emergent Orphic Eros of *The Second Coming*, apparent throughout the editing of Auden. It is as if the poet found identity in the Thirties in an Orphic-inspired rebellion against the inequities of an inherited Promethean ethic, but, once within the

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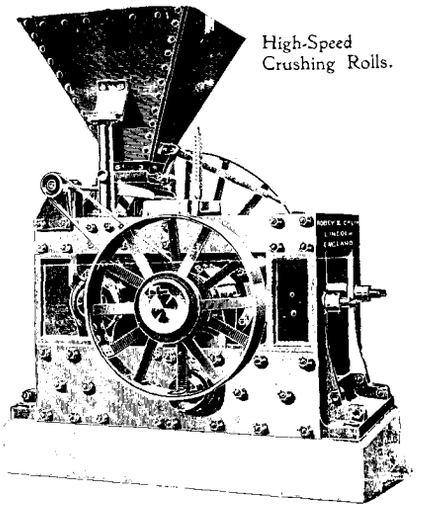
safety of the Cathedral, sought to strengthen his stewardship therein by pronouncing inoperative any poetic policy suspect of that formal incongruence and theologic heterodox which accompanies the decline of letters and the advance of the irrational.

Auden was never much of a one for demiurgical clergy such as Hopkins or St. John of the Cross, two examples of highly erotic, if mightily repressive, poets; but these come off a good deal sexier than the supposedly Dionysiac Auden, who chambered Epos with Clio but laundered Eros in Narcissus. Yeats, moreover, for all his foppy maudishness, wrote the sexier sonnet.

The gospels of all four of these scribes seem intemperate, even horny when compared with the erstwhile four brilliant editions of the utterances of Jesus, who was, before anything else, the Second Coming of Orpheus, and who, after all, must become the archetype of His antithesis.

If culture be condemned to machinery, then ethics will be business—so perhaps we should rejoice, not cavil, at the refusal of Auden's rhetoric to accommodate the advances of mechanism. But here again the mirror bites the image: the rejection seems to be of a fount (or is it *font*) of his character:

It is known that Auden as a child found his imaginative landscape most stimulated by configurations like this one found pressed into a volume called *Lead & Zinc*, which was among his oldest books:



High-Speed Crushing Rolls.

The thematic concitation which made him prominent was an exorcism of the implications of such contraptions, and the structural virtuosity which made him pre-eminent surely was prefigured in such precincts: Einstein, reports Bucky Fuller, discovered Relativity studying the patents of clocks.

Perhaps it was with Auden as with the sciences, that values were technical, and technique relative. He always loved discussing his poems as though they were carburetors, sending jets of fact and fiction through conduits of faculty and fancy.

Is it possible also that Auden's methodology and expediencies had more to do with those of Robert McNamara than either could possibly have imagined? Auden kept his distance from Vietnam, and privately gave the implication of his American citizenship in that affair as grounds for his Nobel rejections. He was never much at military protocol—though his New York best friend did work in industrial public-relations, and his friend Mr. Kallman, in another war, did a stint in a military office of censorship.

But, as he insisted, Auden was not a camera—though he did pose for quite a few snapshots. Indeed, looking through the tribute-book's generous allotment of previously unpublished photos, of Wystan's strikingly Nordic mother and equestrian father, of himself, as a baby with his brothers, in an Army uniform, on the beach with Isherwood and Spender—always (excepting, of course as a baby) with that slightly decadent cigarette—one begins somehow to laugh off his paradoxes and, beyond all protestation, his creatured Image becomes the Likeness he so ecumenically divined.

BOOKS

THE CHRISTIAN-MARXIAN ALTERNATIVE

DOROTHY DOHEN

The Alternative Future: A Vision of Christian Marxism

ROGER GARAUDY,
translated by
LEONARD MAYHEW

Simon & Schuster, $6.95

I approached *The Alternative Future* with a good deal of interest and hope: interest, because I was teaching the Sociology of Work to a class of sixty, two-thirds of whom were adults who needed neither myself nor any other sociologist to tell them of the reality of worker discontent in an industrial age; hope, because I had previously read Garaudy's article, "Faith and Revolution," (published in the Spring 1973 issue of *Cross Currents*) and anticipated that, in a longer treatment of the issues he had raised, he would go further in clarifying the relationship of Christianity and Marxism in a future that would include meaningful work in a world of human meaning.

The book has proved to me to be a great disappointment, even though I am left still with a great deal of sympathy for the author, both as a person and as a prophet goaded by an inchoate vision. How can one fail to sympathize with a man who writes in the book's *Conclusion:*

"It is an overwhelming experience when a man who has professed himself an atheist for many years discovers that there has always been a Christian inside him. It is overwhelming to accept responsibility for such a hope.

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"After thirty-seven years as a Party militant and twenty years as one of its leaders, after finding the meaning and beauty of life there, it is agonizing to have to doubt the very conception of this Party precisely in order to hold on to the hope that it brought to life.

"This book was written in agony, hope, and passion . . . without any spirit of polemics . . . to help others face a dead end . . . and to suggest a possible future."

The reviewer indeed has to be convinced that her role includes objective evaluation to point out the lacks in a book whose author's commitment to correct social injustice in his native France has been worked out in a career marked by sustained courage. But I must fault his book on three counts: one, that his view of Christianity is simplistic; two, that his criticism of the ills of the contemporary world is not radical enough; three, that his program for revolution—and despite his disclaimer he is quite specific about what that program includes—is "old hat."

Garaudy quite rightly objects to the dualism that has marked Christianity and its theology, and he sees the young especially as demonstrating their intuitive wisdom by reacting against this dualism. But one wonders if Garaudy's fear of dualism prevents him from seeing theological dialectic. Thus, the context of transcendence for him means future-orientation, and activity to improve this world, and, evidently, nothing more. One can agree with Garaudy that it is a historical fact that it took Marxism to remind Christians that the future of the earth is their business, but one can ask if it is their only business. One can agree that the Christian more than anyone else by virtue of his conscious, willing participation in the mysteries of Crucifixion and Resurrection is called to remake this world, but does he do it with recognition that Christ said his kingdom is not of this world? Questions like these Garaudy does not face. His is not the synthesis that might hopefully have resulted if he had faced up to questions such as those posed by Jacques Ellul in *False Presence of the Kingdom*. The conclusion has to be that while Garaudy's eloquence is edifying for the Christian social actionist who is more than likely to be discouraged these days, he brings to the social actionist insights from Marxism without the illumination of the method of Marx.

My second major criticism is that Garaudy's denunciation of contemporary ills is not radical enough. True, his criticism of what he calls Stalinist technobureaucracy is no less incisive than his criticism of capitalism. His contact with the young has convinced him that there is a worldwide crisis in values as well as in the social structures in which people live and love and work and raise their families. It would be an injustice to Garaudy to say that he sees the present crisis as due to capitalism alone, and it would be a misrepresentation of his material to imply that work is the only institution he sees in need of change. Certainly he sees education as an institution whose purposes and procedures should be seriously questioned. But even here his suggestions for reform reveal that science and technology are not among the institutions he has called in question. While it would probably be unfair to Garaudy to say that he has not yet realized Ivan Illich's point that for the worker in the auto plant it makes little difference in his day-to-day discontent whether it is Ford or the socialist state that owns the plant, Garaudy would probably see the answer to the worker's plight in the direct democracy which he so ardently espouses. Garaudy has not yet come to question, as Illich does, the whole modern system of transportation. In comparison with Illich's *Tools for Conviviality*, Garaudy's *Alternative Future* lacks a radical examination of science and technology as they now affect post-industrial and industrializing nations.

I have to confess that I was very surprised when I checked to discover that *The Alternative Future* was first published in France in 1972. As I read it I kept thinking it belonged to those heady, exhilarating days of the sixties when on university campuses in the United States revolution was being made. Perhaps it is just that it took the French—or, at least, Garaudy—longer to lose their optimism. At any rate, Garaudy like sixties campus revolutionaries has no faith in representative democracy and urges instead direct democracy and what he calls a socialism of self-management. He had yet to discover at the time he wrote the book that what we called "participatory democracy" and the consensus it was supposed to achieve too often meant the tyranny of the minority, as the representative democracy he rejects is likely to mean the tyranny of the majority.

One worries about the revolution he advocates when he writes: "This does not mean that such a revolution excludes *a priori* all violence but simply that it need not include violence." And again, "The means to be used could not exclude violence under pain of betraying the future . . . this kind of revolution does not need violence to succeed. It would only have recourse to violence to defend itself against the armed aggression of a minority opposed to the conscious choice of the majority."

It may be objected that here the bias of the reviewer toward non-violence is indicated. However, the reviewer has another reason for quoting the above sentences with concern. Perhaps even raising the question reveals a bias in favor of democratic voting procedures, but I will raise it anyway: How does one know that the revolution is the conscious choice of the majority? Garaudy does not say, except to tell us that it will be the result of the "populist alliance" (the translator's phrasing perhaps giving Garaudy's words a different meaning?) ushered in by the national strike.

As I finished reading *The Alternative Future* I happened on the December 16, 1974 issue of *The New Yorker*. The writer of the column "The Talk of the Town" was reporting on the one-day national strike that had taken place two months before in France. What

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struck me most was his conclusion that only the Left was optimistic for they thought the problem was simply capitalism, which, after all, could certainly be done away with. For everybody else there was a feeling of pessimism arising out of an awareness of a deeper malaise.

Read Garaudy, of course. But balance him with prophets of the deeper malaise. Like Ellul. Like Illich.

Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina From 1670 Through the Stono Rebellion

PETER H. WOOD

Knopf, $10

Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made

EUGENE GENOVESE

Pantheon, $17.50

C. PETER RIPLEY

The controversy surrounding *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Little, Brown, 1974) should not obscure the fact that the past few years have been productive for scholars of slavery. While *Time on the Cross* authors Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman relied upon computers and the skills of economic historians to reach such positive conclusions about institutional slavery that one reviewer dubbed it the "jolly institution," humanist historians were challenging new materials and asking new questions. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life In The Ante-Bellum South* (Oxford University Press, 1972), relied heavily upon previously slighted black sources when writing about the community which bondsmen created and then successfully utilized as a buffer against harsher plantation realities. No less concerned with black sources and slave society is George P. Rawick, *From Sundown to Sunup: The Making of the Black Community* (Greenwood, 1972). David Brion Davis will publish this year *The Problem of Slavery in The Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Cornell University Press), a sequel to his Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Cornell University Press, 1966). The two books reviewed here support the judgment that it has been a profitable and bountiful decade for students of slavery.

Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll* is nicely subtitled *The World the Slaves Made*, for that is the essence of the book. We are given an exhaustive, provocative, and, at times, brilliant tour of the slaves' world: housing, food, cooking, clothing, jobs, working conditions, religion, education, language, morals, wives, husbands, children, concubines, Nannies, accommodation, resistance and revolution. Nor are the slaves' neighbors ignored, those people with whom they interacted and on a day to day basis—overseers, yeoman farmers, lower-class whites, planters, plantation mistresses, and free Negroes are all sketched. When the tour is completed, we reflect, and come away convinced that the slaves did indeed go a long way in making their own world and did pave the way "for a separate black national culture while enormously enriching American culture as a whole."

The foundation for Genovese's symbiotic slave system is not racism, as it has been for many historians in the past, but rather it is a class relationship based on paternalism, which, he argues, by its nature recognized the humanity of slaves. Acceptance of that paternalistic relationship by both masters and slaves implied reciprocal duties (e.g. providing food, clothing and shelter in exchange for labor); but the slaves added to the relationship "their own doctrine of reciprocal rights." While the slaves accepted paternalism and thus "an imposed white domination," "they drew their own lines, asserted their rights and preserved their self-respect."

The manner in which slaves asserted their rights and the means by which they preserved their self-respect are themes which Genovese returns to throughout the book. A privilege or reward once granted by the master was frequently assumed as a right by the slaves—the right to garden plots, to free time, to work incentives, to elaborate funerals and weddings, to holidays, and ultimately and cumulatively, the right to shape their own world.

Religion played a dominant role within the slave community, for while it developed as a vehicle of accommodation it was also a tool of resistance and a means of sustaining self-respect. Genovese devotes one of four parts of the book to "The Rock and the Church." Rejecting the thesis that Afro-Americans were stripped of their African religious cultures while being forbidden full access to a European one, he concludes that they drew from both to produce their own distinctive pattern of religious beliefs. It provided slaves with a "sense of their own worth before God and man," the one thing necessary to prevent transformation into Sambos. Religion was thus indispensable in preventing the slave process from being complete.

Rivaling religion for its supportive role within the slave community was the family. Adding to a new consensus, Genovese suggests "that the slaves created impressive norms of family life, including as much of a nuclear family as conditions permitted, and that they entered the post [Civil] war social system with a remarkably stable base." The norms were not those of a permissive and disjointed sub-culture but rather a community of assertive and loving mothers and fathers, of children who were allowed to play out their roles as children, and of a set of family and community standards which provided for orphans and the aged in a manner which left self-respect intact. Not incidentally, slaves frequently lived in single family dwellings and consumed their usually adequate food portions at family meals.

Genovese is at his best when pointing out the contradictions in the slave system. A few examples will suffice. Southern laws defining slaves as chattel conflicted with planter paternalism which made them not only human but part of the plantation family; slave religion sustained black self-respect, but it also was part of an accommodative posture;

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house servants were usually the best treated and most trusted, but they were frequently the first to desert the plantation during the Civil War and immediately after.

Peter Wood is no less sensitive to the contradictions in slavery. In *Black Majority*, which treats the development of slavery in the lowlands of colonial South Carolina from 1670 to the Stono rebellion in 1739, he proposes that Africans brought to that frontier area "distinctive strengths and skills" necessary for the survival and growth of the colony; but the contributions they made gave them a status and a numerical majority which eventually prompted anxious whites to gradually structure chattel slavery into a rigid and repressive institution.

During the first generation of settlement and colonization, South Carolina was a frontier which required pioneer qualities of its laborers. Cattle raising, which sustained the colony economically until rice came to the fore, was dominated by slaves. They tended the cattle on open ranges, and butchered, cured and packed meat for export (in slave-built barrels); they monopolized skilled jobs in the forest and related industries, in the building trades and in fishing and water transportation along the coast; they were also active in agriculture and in the fur trade, particularly in negotiating with Indians. Most significant, Wood proposes that some of these skills may have been learned from the Indians or otherwise acquired in the colony, but most were "carryovers"—skills brought to the new world from Africa.

The relationship between black laborers and white rice personifies the contradiction. Rice, which emerged as the staple crop of plantation South Carolina by the early 18th century, was not grown by white immigrants in Europe or by local Indians. Both were ignorant of such matters. The knowledge and skills necessary for successful cultivation and harvest of rice in the Carolina lowlands most likely came from Africa; the strain of rice which finally generated a staple crop was also a probable African import. Less speculative is the result of the juxtaposition of these two elements: during the period when rice began to dominate South Carolina's economy, "the African portion of the population drew equal to, and then surpassed, the European portion." African skills and an African crop generated an African majority in colonial Carolina.

Slavery there, at least during the pioneer period, was not unlike what Genovese describes for the late 18th and early 19th century South. Carolina's black laborers' awareness of their con-

FANTASTIC STORIES

JOHN GARVEY

A couple of years ago there was a lot written about a new approach to theology, one which is really a revival of the most ancient approach. The idea was that storytelling could serve as the most appropriate vehicle for religious thought, and given the way religious truths have of showing themselves in symbols, the idea seemed right. Happily, there was not an avalanche of books in which people weaned on ponderous theological prose suddenly tried to take wing; the few examples of deliberate theological storytelling I saw were embarrassing, a little like the dancing hippos in *Fantasia*.

But the basic idea was sound, and it may not have had the attention it really deserved. A kind of fantasy renaissance occurred during the sixties, beginning in a time of heightened political consciousness with the surprising success of J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Some movement people had stupid objections to this—it was escapist, therefore a retreat from the struggle. In a sense they had something: it is subversive of purely political thinking to imply that there is a wider world, with larger concerns, than the one the movement wanted to define. But in practice the objection was groundless. A lot of people who were involved with political action enjoyed Tolkien and kept on working, maybe refreshed a little by their contact with something as basic as fantasy.

Fantastic stories of one sort or another have been around since man learned to use words, and they have frequently served as the tribe's way of handing on its theological and moral principles, as well as its way of dealing during waking hours with its dreams. What is remarkable is not that this form is suddenly popular again, but that it ever stopped being popular. Like community dancing, singing, or game playing, in recent years we have considered it acceptable in children, shameful in adults. But there are levels of terror in some of Hans Christian Andersen's tales, or in the Grimm fairy tales, that children really can't understand. Still, fantasy wasn't considered adult. The only fantasy which adults felt able to accept was marked by a whimsy which many readers found too cloying (I find it impossible to get into *The Hobbit* or *Wind in the Willows* for that reason), a whimsy which made fantasy all right, which winked at the reader and said, "This isn't real."

But Tolkien got beyond whimsy into epic valor and glory, and suddenly wonder, awe, and terror were all right again. The trend continues: C. S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* (Macmillan, $6.95) has enjoyed a revival, and Richard Adams' *Shardik* (Simon & Schuster, $9.95) is a best seller.

It is easy to see why Christians have enjoyed watching all this. Not only were some of the best writers of fantasy, like Tolkien and Lewis, Christians; there is something satisfying about the enlargement of horizons which fantasy involves. But there is also something a little too

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tributions, coupled with the leveling influence and mutual dependence of pioneer life, encouraged them to assume a posture which Wood describes as "unfree." They remained slaves. That was never in question. But as Wood so ably demonstrates, slavery in that place and time was a fluid, elastic, maturing institution. The controls and restrictions traditionally associated with Southern slavery were yet to emerge. As a result, blacks, who were a majority of the population, were able to preserve "traditions of behavior, speech and myth," and were able to sustain "social and, occasionally, economic self-sufficiency." For example, Charleston's "unfree" Negroes had the resources necessary to buy and resell enough plantation produce to effect an increase in prices.

African skills, knowledge and labor

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easy about it, if you are looking for our age's real dreams. Ordinary fantasy tends toward a cloudy archaicism —it is set in kingdoms, not democracies, and it involves princes and witches rather than policemen and psychiatrists. There is a consolation about this landscape. We deal with good and evil in a way that is somehow familiar to us. If we do not believe in kings we believe at least that power may be used by good people for holy reasons, just as it can be used for evil by evil people. We believe that there is a power about benevolence, that the good will win somehow, or ought to win, even in worldly terms. We believe that we will be aided in our search. These presuppositions do well in the archaic world of Tolkien or Lewis. Nothing there is really a challenge to them; the landscape reinforces them.

But these beliefs are not at all self-evident. Fantasy also has the function of raising disturbing dreams and registering the changes in a society's self-awareness. Andersen's *The Shadow* is a good example, and so is the medieval dance of death.

I'd like to suggest that the kind of fantasy which serves this function in our time is the kind we know as science fiction. C. S. Lewis, who wrote both fantasy and science fiction, noted that science fiction fans "like it thus ravenously, and . . . those who do not are often revolted by it. The repulsion of the one sort has the same coarse strength as the fascinated interest of the other." The "coarse strength" Lewis referred to was a kind of ferocity, a lust apparent in science fiction and not in fantasy. He thought it might require a psychoanalytical explanation, and wrote his own science fiction, he says, to exorcise this "fierce curiosity." (*Surprised by Joy*, Harcourt, $2.25.)

Only one critic I know of—Leslie Fiedler—has suggested taking a serious look at the popularity of science fiction. Robert Heinlein's naive exploration of sex and community, *Stranger in a Strange Land* (Berkeley, $1.95), has been a cult-book among young people for years and influenced Charles Manson. Myth and reality touch here, but I don't know of any good studies of the phenomenon.

Here are some other products of that "fierce curiosity": in Norman Spinrad's *The Iron Dream* (Avon, $1.95) Adolph Hitler grows up to become a science fiction writer who writes novels about fascist conquest and makes appreciative critics thank God that such perversity could never come into real power. Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* (Berkeley, $1.25) describes another alternative world in which Germany and Japan have won World War Two. Its hero is a writer who has written a suppressed novel about a world in which the Allied forces won—and it is not our world. Robert Silverberg's *Born with the Dead* (Vintage, $1.95) is a trilogy consisting of three short novels. Two deal disturbingly with death, and the third is about a prophet who persuades a desperate world to ask God for a sign. The sign is given, everyone is convinced, and things get even worse. Alfred Bester's *The Computer Connection* (Berkley/Putnam, $6.95) is a light and fast-moving thing, but consider some of the things it touches: 1) people who are physically immortal because they have died horrible deaths; 2) a nice man who therefore tortures people to death, because he admires them and wants them to live forever; 3) the takeover of a Cherokee physicist by malevolent computers; 4) three space voyagers who return home as embryos and grow into wonderful hermaphrodites. Michael Moorcock's *An Alien Heat* (Harper, $.95) shows a time at the end of the world when technology has made it possible for the few remaining human beings to live out every fantasy, and the race has become so decadent that the excited announcement by an alien creature of the imminent end of the universe is greeted with yawns. The hero decides to fall in love because he hasn't done *that* yet; and I have to admit liking a novelist who can start a book with a line like "Dressed in various shades of light brown, the Iron Orchid and her son sat upon a cream colored beach of crushed bone."

By offering alternative presents, or pictures of the future, science fiction says something important about where we are and it does this in a way conventional fiction can't. This could be why novelists like Walker Percy, in *Love in the Ruins* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $7.95) and Doris Lessing, in *Memoirs of a Survivor* (Knopf, $6.95), have turned to future settings. This sort of fantasy allows us to use our minds in ways the world tries to discourage, by allowing us to imagine that the future is not determined, and things don't have to be the way they are. It can be prophetic, in the warning rather than the predictive sense, and tells us something about our real dreams and fears. (It isn't witches we are scared of.)

And having been so serious about it, I should mention that it really *is* fun to read the stuff.

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enabled colonial South Carolina not only to survive the "pioneer period" but to mature into an economically sound plantation society. Blacks did not, as some historians have argued, linger as ignorant, dependent and unskilled laborers, but rather they "participated in—and in some way dominated—the evolution of that particular social and geographical frontier." As they grew to numerical superiority they created and preserved a distinct and separate social and, occasionally, economic culture.

By the 1720s, however, many of the conditions which allowed "unfree" slaves to flourish were changing. The frontier society which valued assertive and resourceful servants was giving way to a plantation society and economy which preferred obedient and submissive field hands. Skilled and industrious blacks who hired their time, bought and sold commodities and livestock, or were involved in boating, or worse yet, were armed during periods of crisis were, as the society changed, viewed anxiously by the white minority. That anxiety translated into increased controls and regulations over the black majority—"In a variety of ways [the slaves] were being pushed from the dubious position of unfree laborers to a degrading status of racial slaves."

To oversimplify one of Wood's theses, the process of assertive, "unfree" blacks resisting increased white controls culminated in the Stono rebellion of 1739. Eventually crushed, it marked a turning point in South Carolina history. Following it, whites more clearly "defined . . . the social, economic, and even physical 'place' of black Carolinians." A changed institution eventually emerged, one characterized by a "heightened degree of white repression and a reduced amount of black autonomy."

Genovese and Wood are well read together. *Roll, Jordan Roll*, while clearly the most comprehensive book yet on slavery, tends to slight the developing institution; Wood's strength rests with his effort to show how and why slavery changed and evolved as it did (although admittedly the specifics may be peculiar to colonial South Carolina). *Black Majority*, drawn from limited sources available for one colony during parts of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, is generally less satisfying in matters of slave culture and society, areas where Genovese glows. Both argue overwhelmingly for the contributions made by Africans and Afro-Americans to the new world; both, to varying degrees, describe a separate black culture; both leave the reader convinced that slaves shaped their own world to a far greater extent than historians have acknowledged until recent years.

A Coach's World

RICHARD "DIGGER" PHELPS
and LARRY KEITH

Crowell, $6.95

Lords of the Locker Room

MARTIN RALBOVSKY

Wyden, $7.95

Buckeye

ROBERT VARE

Harper's Magazine Press, $7.95

MICHAEL ROBERTS

To borrow a line from the stand-up comics, one out of three ain't bad.

Each of these books addresses in its own way the uniquely privileged, powerful and influential status that goes with being coach of an athletic team in this country.

Unfortunately Digger Phelps, coach of the Notre Dame basketball team, and Larry Keith, his collaborator, lose sight of the lofty aims they seem to have started with, and *A Coach's World* degenerates into an example (and not a particularly entertaining one) of the "gee whiz" genre of sports literature.

And, while *Lords of the Locker Room* attacks the issues head-on, it loses considerable impact because of an unrelieved humorless, polemical tone.

Robert Vare's *Buckeye*, by contrast, is entertaining and incisive.

Vare obviously did the requisite research. Equally important, through perserverance he gained Woody Hayes' confidence to the extent that the Ohio State football coach felt comfortable ranting in Vare's presence.

Hence, in many passages the author is able to capture the essence of Hayes, the inveterate ranter. He carries on about the decline of respect for American political figures ("It wouldn't surprise me if they got to Lincoln before too long."), women's liberation ("bunch of goddam lesbians") and a host of other topics, and quotes freely, if inappropriately, from Shakespeare, Napoleon, Santayana, Patton (George), Lombardi, (Vince), Pasteur and Royal (Darrell).

What emerges is a devastating portrait of a man who has acquired an absurdly disproportionate moral and political influence over the city of Columbus and the state of Ohio by virtue of nothing more than total devotion to the mindless ethic of sport in America: victory as an absolute value.

For all his incessant talk about principles, Hayes' code is a moral muddle. On Watergate, he emoted thusly to Vare: "The way I see it, Nixon had to cover up to win the election. Hell, I'd have done the same thing if any of my coaches had done something and I found out about it. My first reaction would have been: Well, shoot, we've done something wrong, but we can't make it right by letting the whole goddamned world know about it."

He is an uncompromising disciplinarian—until he senses mutiny among the players over the prospect of another

REVIEWERS

DOROTHY DOHEN is a member of the Sociology Department at Fordham University's Lincoln Center Campus in New York City.

C. PETER RIPLEY is a Lecturer in History and Afro-American studies at Yale University.

MICHAEL ROBERTS is a former sports writer for the *Washington Star*.

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joyless, heavily-supervised Rose Bowl trip. Hayes turns pragmatist, relents, and in Pasadena there is a tacit understanding that players are permitted to entertain women in their motel rooms.

This is the same Woody, of course, who agonizes over the task of finding a movie for the night before the game that won't be too much for the psyches of his impressionable lads. After viewing *Easy Rider*, the lads had barely gotten by Minnesota. "Now," Hayes says, "I have my coaches scout the movies we see so these kids won't get hurt."

This is not to say that Vare relates every aspect of the Hayes story with a subtle sneer. He notes, with detachment if not admiration, Hayes' tremendous capacity for work, his dawn to midnight regimen, his fanatical devotion to detail and thoroughness. Surprisingly, Hayes never developed an ulcer. "Three of his quarterbacks . . . and several assistants have had them," Vare writes. "But he never has. He's just a carrier."

To his Ohio constituency he's a carrier of an ideal—an ideal embodied in the ability to annihilate most of the opposition each year and knock off Michigan as often as not. In their reflection of the glory and grandeur of Woody Hayes, the pages of *Buckeye* demonstrate the vast appeal and enduring attraction of that ideal.

A Coach's World views the same phenomena from a diametrically opposite moral standpoint. There is, for instance, a sense of things being fitting and proper in the accounting of Digger Phelps' perquisites and emoluments: the high salary, the television show, the free automobile.

Similarly, Phelps and Keith, unlike Vare put a totally benign construction on the fact that Notre Dame players—for no merit other than their athletic ability—receive economic and academic benefits beyond their scholarships. Whereas Vare finds it sinister that fat-cat alumni dole out summer jobs to the jocks, Phelps ticks off the list like an honor roll: the brewer, the businessman, the Woolworth executive.

Also, by way of protesting that the Notre Dame athlete is expected to measure up to general academic standards, the authors disclose that the university has a system set up to monitor the athletes constantly—a sort of Distant Early Warning system to assure that no sneak attack from academia will knock a player out of the lineup. "You've got to understand," a professor explains, "that athletes are born optimists. They think they can make a comeback in the classroom the way they do in a game."

Or maybe it's that they think they are immune. Considering the high ideals for which Notre Dame has always stood, might it not be better to let athletes fail or succeed, find jobs or not find jobs on their own?

There is nothing in *A Coach's World* to indicate that the question ever crossed Digger Phelps' mind. Fr. Edmund P. Joyce chairman of the Faculty Board in Control of Athletics gets a brief say early in the book: ". . . we're not willing to pay an improper price for success. We want to be as good as we can without sacrificing our principles." The logical next question—What price is improper?—is never asked.

Instead, the book plunges into a surfeit of X's and O's, an overdramatized minute-by-minute account of the days leading up to the big UCLA game,

> *There, standing in a doorway, was a hulking man, his large arms folded above a stomach that protruded like a glacial boulder . . . He had neatly trimmed, ash-white hair that was combed straight back and a neck thick enough to support a Rodin head. The small, hazel eyes flashed cold fire, the thin lips curled in a bellicose scowl. There was no doubt that I was in the uniquely disquieting presence of Wayne Woodrow Hayes, the terrible-tempered dragon of the gridiron, molder of great football teams, smiter of players, and press, sacker of down markers, student of history, military strategist, brooder, brawler, high priest of Middle America.*
>
> —Buckeye

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triviality and minutiae—enough, in short, to tax the endurance of even the stoutest believer in the proposition that the winning of a basketball game is a matter of consequence.

In *Lords of the Locker Room* Ralbovsky concentrates on a subject largely overlooked in the other two books, namely the ways in which youngsters are affected by the autocratic aspects of the system. He knocks many eminently knockable entities, among them Little League and kiddie football.

The trouble is that this is an ideological tract which attributes the very worst motives to just about everybody involved and makes some ludicrous, not to say unsupportable, premises—for example, that Catholic schools have more zeal than non-Catholic schools for gaining prestige through athletic success.

Certainly there is reason to worry about the well-being of the millions of youngsters in the keeping of would-be Vince Lombardis, and certainly there is much worthy of criticism in the organization of sports for children. But Ralbovsky's manner of argument is likely to convince no one.

CORRESPONDENCE

(*Continued from page 291*)

diocesan clergy. Letters supporting the Bishop have appeared in the daily and diocesan press and I would dare say—and this is based on my contacts and conversations with priests—that far more clergy support his position than oppose it.

In another assertion Mr. True reports that the advisory commission on corrections called for the warden's dismissal as if that vote were undisputed. In fact the meeting called to approve the report and some members of the commission did not attend casting doubt on the validity of the vote. Moreover, two members, both highly regarded judges were among those who repudiated the report. Finally in what is the most interesting aspect of this episode, most of the inmate organizations—in a prison that is the most highly organized in the country—strongly back the administration of the warden.

Again Mr. True is entitled to his say. I do wish he'd make the short trip from Worcester to Providence to find out a few of the facts. Perhaps the article might have been more accurate, more reflective of the problems and perhaps we might have been spared that nasty little cheap shot at both the governor and Bishop Gelineau that closes the piece.

ROBERT T. CONNAUGHTON
Editor, *The Providence Visitor*

Reply

On an issue as complex and significant as the relationship between church and state in Rhode Island, it is indeed important to have as much information as possible; for that reason Robert Connaughton's letter, including his correction about "minimum" security, is helpful. On the description and interpretation of several incidents, as well as the whole deplorable situation at the ACI and the treatment of prisoners, we obviously differ, and as editor of the diocesan newspaper, Mr. Connaughton is certainly justified in coming on strong in defense of his bishop. His defense of the judges and the warden, in light of extensive testimony by lawyers directly involved with the prison, is, however, surprising.

Editorials and news stories in the *Providence Journal* and *Bulletin*, unlike those in the diocesan *Visitor*, have been consistently critical of the ACI administration. Here, from the June 3 *Journal*, is a representative story: "The federal government has suspended financing of a $387,000 correctional program package because the state Department of Corrections has failed to establish drug and alcohol treatment programs, and does not meet minimum standards for training of personnel."

In response to Mr. Connaughton's criticisms of my article, I must add: (1) that the co-chaplain's resignation statements, in obedience to the bishop, were still more consistent with their earlier position of advocacy than they were with Bishop Gelineau's new guidelines; (2) that I did make the 40-mile trip from Worcester to Providence, with a full day of interviews of people directly and indirectly involved in the issue, including the diocesan vicar for community affairs; (3) that my extensive file of articles and public statements by various people indicates considerable disagreement in reporting and in editorializing on the dismissal, but leaves little doubt about where the *Visitor* stands; and (4) that in any reporting, one has to be selective without, I hope, being unfair; one makes an interpretation on the basis of the evidence, even if—according to Mr. Connaughton—most priests back the bishop and most prisoners back the warden. We could disagree, however, without his calling my concluding statement "a nasty little cheap shot," for it seemed to me it grew quite naturally out of the evidence; it is also a view shared by others about the bishop's administration thus far.

More recent developments, like the denial of federal funds, further dramatize the situation in the prison. On June 15, the inmates' legal aid lawyer at ACI resigned in frustration, saying, "The attitude of the state is that the people we are serving are expendable." In a related incident, the ACLU has agreed to handle an inmate's charge that there has been a serious violation of separation of powers concerning religion.

My concluding paragraph simply suggested that, in matters of ministry and justice, one expects the state's chief executive and the church's shepherd to disagree, particularly given the USCC statement on correctional reform. On the basis of a speech by the Providence shepherd on social justice to the Knights of Columbus (*Visitor*,

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May 22)—which was challenged again in a public statement by diocesan clergy and laity—one might add, in Milton's words, that the sheep "look up and are not fed."

MICHAEL TRUE

Searching for Roots

Evanston, Ill.

To the Editors: Abigail McCarthy's two recent articles in *Commonweal* on "Our Search for Roots" [April 25 & May 23] present a familiar and aggravating argument to the ethnic consciousness in America. Weil is, indeed, wrong about American culture, but not for the reasons that Ms. McCarthy presents. Ms. McCarthy does not see the possibilities in America that lie in the rich heritage that each family, ethnic group, and region can contribute to an individual's life. The idea (ideal?) of a "common moral and spiritual heritage" may indeed be the product of a pre-Vietnam mentality in America. If the post-W.W. II American literary histories are any indication, international American imperialism found its parallel in the internal cultural imperialism of the 1950s and 60s. The fact that both appear to be seriously challenged now informs us that neither was very secure to begin with.

Though artists who treat the human condition eloquently in their own right, Baldwin and Stein are quoted with such confidence that one imagines the reader is supposed to stand up and cheer. What can a self-exiled, upper-class American tell the Polish-, Italian-, or Mexican-American about his post-W.W.II experiences? Have not members of Stein's class been attempting this for years? This, it seems to me, is what the hubbub is all about. What does Baldwin mean by "American whites," anyway? He may have had a bone to pick with Faulkner. But how deep and how passionate can a relationship be between people who have disparate traditions? The master-slave relationship is indeed a perplexing and complex one. But twentieth century European immigrants were not masters; they were slave labor. Besides, they did not get here before W.W. I, not to mention the one between the states. The immigrant's relationship with blacks must be premised upon new and more substantial grounds. The complexities here should keep American sociologists busy for the next three generations. Finally, Ms. McCarthy writes: "An Italian who grew up on the shores of one of the gray Great Lakes . . . will find his eye unsatisfied in the country of his fathers." What Ms. McCarthy misses here would take volumes to explain; and by my count, that has already begun.

KENNETH SCAMBRAY

Reply

I think it is probably just as well to continue the discussion of *Our Search for Roots* because it seems to have provoked some emotion and misunderstanding. The above letter is a case in point. What I tried to suggest was that our roots are multiple, that we are shaped as much by shared experience and environment as we are by nationality, and that we are inextricably bound up with each other. The writer's objections are rather arbitrary and based on things I did not say or imply. For example, I did not say that ethnic experience is not enriching. I come from a state where we enjoy each other's ethnicity and celebrate it. Does the writer think I do not value my own ethnic roots and those of my German, Italian, French, Indian, Swedish, Mexican, and Polish cousins? (I forgot the last two in writing the article—may they forgive me!). I just do not think they are exclusive or definitive.

Nor can I agree that the views of expatriates rediscovering America are invalid. It is exactly the perspective of their rediscovery of Americans as Americans that is valuable. I find his statement about James Baldwin simply extraordinary. As for Gertrude Stein, she knew what it was to experience discrimination as the member of two minorities.

I suppose one could say that all kinds of immigrants came as slave labor, whether 19th or 20th century—even our Wasp 'oppressors' had forebears who came as indentured or convict labor—but they were no more enslaved than the native-born Indians and the Spanish-speaking who preceded them, and, except for the last two, and until lately, the blacks, most of them made their way out via a very American form of the labor movement. As Nicholas von Hoffman has pointed out, both civil rights and the peace movement depended on a coalition of blacks and upper middle class liberals, but I am not sure the coalition the writer hopes for is possible. For the obstacles I refer him to two recent books: *Blue Collar Aristocrats* and *Trying Out the Dream.*

ABIGAIL MCCARTHY

Addendum

The book, *An American Catholic Catechism* (Seabury), is available in paperback for $4.95. The review in the July 18 *Commonweal* referred only to the $10 hardcover edition. The book is edited by George J. Dyer *et al.*

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A New Post

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